



Type: Report

Finding Answers to B.H. Roberts's Questions and "An Unparallel"

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Published: Provo, UT; FARMS, 1985

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Paper
Book of Mormon, Answers to Criticisms

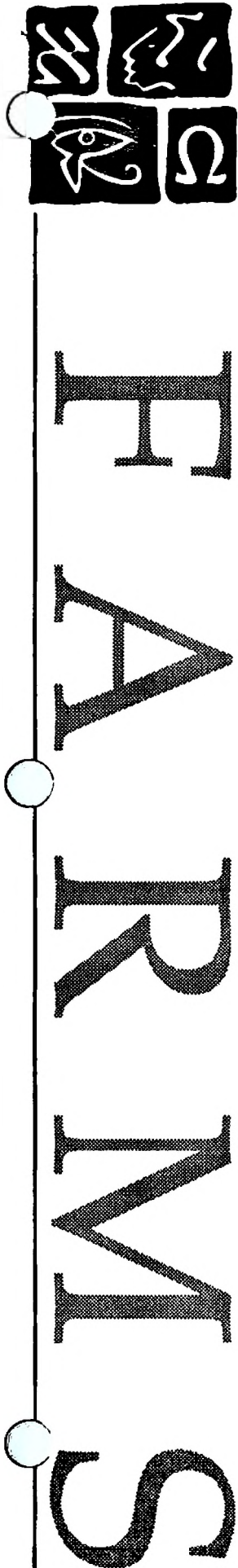
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Preface

The University of Illinois Press published in the fall of 1985 three papers written by B. H. Roberts in 1921-22, collectively titled Studies of the Book of Mormon. The volume also offers introductory and bibliographical essays and reprints some related correspondence. In his three papers, B. H. Roberts explores and puzzles over certain "problems" regarding the Book of Mormon. This publication has generated new interest in old questions. The present memorandum addresses the following issues raised in these Roberts papers:

1) Indian Origins. Roberts found that most writers in his day believed something different about the origins of the American Indians than he did. He collected many of those opinions and asked a number of questions about American antiquities and their relationships to the Book of Mormon. He could not always reconcile those opinions and his beliefs about the Book of Mormon, yet he apparently continued to approve of his old ideas about Indian origins (as he did in editing and using in his mission field a slide show about American archaeology by Gustive O. Larson, Box 15, folder 3, James H. Moyle Collection, Church Historians Office). In the meantime, he "most humbly, but also most anxiously" awaited the "further development of knowledge that will make it possible for us to give a reasonable answer to those who question us concerning [these] matters." (p. 143). Has that "further development" occurred in the last 60 some years? As the following essay shows, there are now logical and plausible explanations for virtually all of Roberts' questions.

2) Archaeology. Roberts was asked to respond to questions asked of the Church about pre-Columbian archaeology. He did not have many answers at his immediate disposal. Today, however, a thousand times as much data is at hand answering many of these questions and providing valuable evidence about the rest.

3) Absurdities. Roberts found things in the Book of Mormon that seemed absurd or erroneous. On closer examination, few of these things are problematic any longer, and indeed many of these oddities end up strengthening the case for the Book of Mormon.

4) A Parallel? Roberts displays several general similarities and a few specific parallels between the Book of Mormon and the second edition (1825) of Ethan Smith's View of the Hebrews (VH). He also points out certain similarities between conversion accounts of the early nineteenth century and passages in the Book of Mormon. These parallels, however, are neither as precise nor as significant as some have made them out to be. In

fact, it will be shown that the Book of Mormon differs from VH far more than it resembles it, making it hard to believe that Joseph Smith relied on VH.

This memorandum will discuss each of these problem areas and will outline possible answers, indicating further where a person can look in research papers written since Roberts' day to find specific information and clarification, but these recent research papers are simply summarized here. It is hoped that this will allow all people interested in these problems to find the relevant research and deal with the issues knowledgeably.

Because many of B. H. Roberts' "problems" are no longer "problems," having been superseded by later generations of research, their recent publication may be viewed by some as ironic, since Roberts himself shunned "quoting the investigations and conclusions of" obsolete writers (p. 91). As this paper will show, Book of Mormon studies have indeed progressed far beyond the questions which B. H. Roberts asked and far beyond the now-antiquated secondary sources from which he quoted in elementary profusion. One of the best uses of these Roberts papers today is in looking back over the last sixty-three years to see how far Book of Mormon studies have come.

Of course, Roberts' questions will always remain interesting to people who are writing biographies of B. H. Roberts or intellectual histories of his day. While the publication of these papers is welcomed for those purposes, readers should not mistake these papers for state-of-the-art. The bibliographical essay in this book describes generally the state of subsequent research on the Ethan Smith issue, and unequivocally acknowledges that their publication "would not be complete without a statement about the recent articles and books on the subject" (pp. 354-55). What the editors say about this one issue should have been followed on a host of other issues as well.

A separate issue, what did Roberts himself believe, is discussed in a separate three-part paper, "Did B. H. Roberts Lose Faith in the Book of Mormon?" by John W. Welch and Truman G. Madsen. In the Study, Roberts was relentless in identifying and stating the problems mentioned above. He stated the case against the Book of Mormon as potently and pugnaciously as he could, usually not offering any proposals for handling those issues. Why was he so tough? Some suggest that he had lost his faith in the Book of Mormon, but those who do have a hard time accounting for Roberts' almost obsessive use of the Book of Mormon in his ministering up to his dying day. It will not do to claim that he had a private "doubting" position and a public "orthodox" facade, for Roberts was, if anything, intellectually honest and outspoken. Furthermore, those with that view of the man cannot account for the tracts, articles, speeches and histories which he wrote in the late 1920s, strongly endorsing the Book of Mormon, long after these rough drafts of the study had been thrown together for entirely private use.

Why, then, was he so tough? To understand one must see Roberts as a debater. He loved to debate and knew how to argue a case in its rawest form. He also believed deeply that by debate much good would emerge. To have presented the problems of the Book of Mormon any less dramatically than he did would have been uncharacteristic of Roberts. This was not a routine devil's advocate brief; but then, Roberts was not a routine advocate.

Did Roberts believe in the Book of Mormon? Yes. Did he have all the answers? No. Did he "most humbly pray" (p. 143) that a solution to all these problems would appear? Yes. Did he want these papers published at all, let alone to stand as a final statement of his beliefs? No. Do we now have answers for all these questions? The following guide to recent research on the Book of Mormon relevant to B. H. Roberts' questions shows that for many we do.

Part I. Roberts' Book of Mormon Difficulties (pp. 61-148).

A. The Indian Origin Problem

Are all American Indians related to Lehi, Ishmael or Zoram? As Roberts shows, many non sequiturs and implausibilities surface if one believes that all inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere are uniquely descendants of Lehi, Ishmael and Zoram who lived around 600 B.C. The undeniable diversity of Indian language groups (pp. 63-64, 84), and the irrefutable evidence that the Western Hemisphere has been occupied for millennia (p. 79-81), present insurmountable problems for this point of view, as for the similar idea (common in the popular literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which the Book of Mormon does not propound, but which Roberts spends much time debunking) that the American Indians descended from the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel.

The answer, however, is simple. Nowhere does the Book of Mormon make or require such a claim. It is quite apparent from the texts of the Book of Mormon itself that the Nephites occupied a very small corner of some part of the Western Hemisphere, as is cogently explained by John L. Sorenson, An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon (Deseret Book, 1985). For example, the text describes distances between the Book of Mormon lands that are measured in terms of days and presumably hundreds, not thousands of miles. E.g., one could travel from the land of Nephi to the city of Zarahemla in about twenty-one slow-moving days (Mos. 23:3 says his group traveled eight days from the Waters of Mormon to the land of Helam, Mos. 24:20 makes it one day from Helam to the Valley of Alma, and Mos. 24:25 adds twelve days from the Valley of Alma to Zarahemla); most of the events in the Book of Mormon take place around this Nephi-Zarahemla axis and the Land Bountiful which is not far beyond. Except for the possibly hyperbolic battle statistics in the Book of Ether (Eth. 15:2), the Book of Mormon always talks in terms of quite small populations. E.g., Benjamin could gather all the Nephites and Mulekites (Mos. 1:10) around the temple in Zarahemla; it only

took 4000 dissenters to cause serious problems in Zarahemla in Alma 51; the multitude in Bountiful consisted of 2500 men, women and children (3 Ne. 17:25, or about 700 families). Thus, there was plenty of room in the New World for separately existing groups of Jaredites, Lamanites, and surely also many other immigrants by land and by sea. The presence of such other groups easily accounts for the problems of ethnic diversity and chronology which stumped Roberts.

This is not to say that such a solution had not occurred to Roberts. Indeed, he proposes this as his first way out of these difficulties (p. 92). Why does he hesitate to embrace the "restricted area" position? He gives three reasons, none of which is compelling:

First, the argument from silence: If there were other peoples on the Western Hemisphere known to the Nephites, why then does the Book of Mormon not mention them? As Sorenson argues, mentioning outsiders may simply have been irrelevant to this particular record, which is an internal history of the lineage of Nephi. The histories of other groups, even of the closely related Lamanites, Zoramites and Mulekites, are relatively unimportant to this record, except to the extent they impinge directly on internal Nephite affairs. As for the Jaredites, Ether's condensed account provides too little information about Jaredite history to tell us with whom they may or may not have had contact.

Furthermore, there may be greater evidence in the Book of Mormon of contacts with other peoples than has been previously noticed. For example, the rapid acquisition by the Lamanites of native traits and ways of life (Jarom 1:20) as well as their increase in numbers is circumstantial evidence of their intermarriage with and possible dominance over indigenous peoples. Perhaps this is where their darker skin came from and why skin color was important to the Nephites who, like their Israelite ancestors, preferred to keep tribal purity by avoiding marriage outside the nation. The Zoramite ritual in Alma 30-31 may likewise evidence influences from other cultures. Moreover, the lure of moving into the land "northward" where people (unlike the Nephites in Zarahemla) knew how to build expertly with cement (Hel. 3:7-11), probably indicates the existence of other civilizations there. So strong was this lure that the Nephites used military force to keep the people of Morianton from deserting into the north (Alma 50:29-36). Others leave to go "into the land northward" (Alma 63:9). It is quite possible that they were moving north because they were attracted by the economy and life-styles of other peoples there. (See also Sorenson, pp. 50-58, 146-148.)

Finally, an argument from silence is just that--an argument from silence: it never proves or disproves much.

Second, the argument from Ether 2:5. This verse says that the Jaredites went "into that quarter where there never had man been." Roberts says this probably bars any "more ancient possession of the American continents" (p. 93). But the answer here is plain. Ether 2:5 is most logically read as speaking of the land into which the Jaredites moved as they left the Great Tower and where they spent four years before setting out across

the great sea (Eth. 2:13). Roberts himself allows that this very understanding may solve the entire problem. He says: "It may be questioned if the command of the Lord to Jared's colony to go into an uninhabited land . . . had reference to their ultimate destination in the land of promise, the American continents, or to some land en route, into which they immediately passed. But let that be as it may" (pp. 116-17). Roberts also mentions this theory as a possible explanation in his letter of February 6, 1922 to William Riter (Studies, pp. 53-54). What reason, then, is there to believe that Roberts would not read it this way today, especially in light of the now-abundant evidence that virtually wherever one goes in the Western Hemisphere 600 B.C., and in many places even before 2000 B.C., one finds people living there.¹

Third, the argument from population statistics: Roberts wonders how millions of people could have lived and wandered from Yucatan to Cumorah [New York] and not have encountered any other people. As Sorenson discusses in detail, the Jaredite hill Ramah, also known as the Nephite hill Cumorah, was close to the narrow neck of land, according to reasonable circumstantial and cumulative evidence in the Book of Mormon (Sorenson, pp. 26, 44-45). Thus, it is quite unlikely that the hill in New York, which was unnamed until after 1829, was the same hill as the Nephite hill Cumorah. The hill in New York was simply named after its southern predecessor. Consequently, the assumption that the Jaredites roamed from Mexico to New York is unwarranted. Furthermore, the population statistics for the Nephites in their final battle show only 230,000 able-bodied men (Mor. 6:11-14). (The number was probably much smaller, since it is doubtful that all 23 "ten thousands" were fully staffed armies.) As mentioned above, the Jaredite "millions" is not necessarily an absolutely reliable statistic. Other analyses of Book of Mormon population statistics and demography bear out the conclusion that Roberts has over estimated the size of Nephite civilization.

Having considered Roberts' three objections to the limited geography theory and having found them not compelling, we can only assume that Roberts himself, upon considering the evidence which is now more fully developed than in his day, would do as he said he would and "hail it with very great satisfaction" (p. 94). The presence of other peoples on the Western Hemisphere during Book of Mormon times easily accounts for the diversity of languages and long periods of occupation found here.

In addition, Roberts raises a few other points worth noting in this section (pp. 63-94):

Literacy. Does the Book of Mormon imply--contrary to archaeological evidence--that all occupants of the Western Hemisphere two thousand years ago were literate? Roberts assumes

¹ Likewise, one wonders why George Smith, in his article in Dialogue (Summer 1984) and in his letter to the editor a year later, reinforcing his own article, ignores this possibility--an eventuality for which Roberts himself had allowed?

that the Book of Mormon requires us to believe that they all were literate, and to this effect (p. 64) he quotes passages in the Book of Mormon which refer to the many large books and records "kept chiefly by the Nephites" (Hel. 3:15). But the Book of Mormon does not claim such universal literacy. Kings wrote letters to each other (Alma 59-60; Mor. 6:2), a practice noteworthy enough that particular mention is made of these letters. The records were carefully handed down and entrusted to the kings and rulers of these people, strictly from father to son within certain lineages (e.g., the descendants of Jacob from Enos to Amaleki). Those fathers were careful to teach their sons the language (Mos. 1:2) and the implication is that this is somewhat exceptional. Benjamin supplied a written version of his speech to the general population in Zarahemla but only after what must have been a major task of attempting to teach the illiterate Mulekites the Nephite language. Language skills won such unique recognition for the priests of Noah that they were appointed teachers over the Lamanites, so that the "language of Nephi began to be taught among all the people of the Lamanites" (Mos. 24:4); this exercise must have been short-lived, for those priests of Noah soon fell out of favor among their Lamanite patrons (Alma 25:8). Further study of the actual evidence of literacy and illiteracy among the Book of Mormon peoples would be instructive, but the present point is simply this: within the Book of Mormon, literacy is most strongly evidenced among the priestly and royal classes; it does not require one to believe that all the Book of Mormon peoples--let alone all inhabitants of the Western hemisphere--were literate.

Homogeneity. Roberts assumes that the Mulekites and Nephites merged into "one people" (p. 65) and that the Nephites and Lamanites were fairly homogenous, uniform groups. This stereotype is inadequate to explain the highly fragmentary tribal structure of the Nephite society. At least seven tribal groups retained their distinctive identity over the thousand years of Nephite history (compare Jac. 1:13; 3 Ne. 7:2; 4 Ne. 37-38; Mor. 1:8). In addition, the Mulekite population was larger than the Nephite (Mos. 25:2), and the Mulekites seemed to remain a separate social and ethnic group responsible for the civil wars within the Land of Zarahemla, led by Amlici (Alma 2-4) and Zerahemnah (Alma 43-44), both of whom appear to have Mulekite names and support. In other words, the social structure and characteristics within the Book of Mormon are not so homogenous as Roberts depicts them. Further research on tribal affiliations within the Book of Mormon is currently underway.

Roberts quotes long blocks of material from numerous authors discrediting the idea that all American Indians came from Hebrew origins. As seen above, these materials are not inconsistent with the Book of Mormon. The Indians may have come from somewhere else. Of course, the Lost Ten Tribes theory has little or no merit to it (and it is not the theory of the Book of Mormon in any event, as Roberts insisted in his letter to Elizabeth Skolfield in 1932), but its rejection should not hinge on the idea that such an ocean voyage was "an impossibility" or that pre-Columbians were "utter barbarians" (p. 71), as Baldwin wildly claimed. Long ancient voyages are now well-accepted (such as

Phoenicians plying the Atlantic to the British Isles and probably circumnavigating Africa, and the possibility of Sindbad sailing from Arabia to China and back), and the high level of some civilizations in ancient America is now beyond much dispute (see "In the Wake of Sindbad," National Geographic 162 (July, 1982), pp. 2-41; Sorenson pp. 110-112).

Some inconsistencies in Roberts' own sources should also be noted. Sometimes they are used to show that Indian culture and language was widely divergent and heterogeneous; other times they are quoted as arguing that "the more the Amerinds are studied the more homogeneous do we find them" (p. 73). Anyone would indeed be foolish today to base his opinions about Indian cultures or languages on Robert's rough and naive collection of unscientific opinions from the 19th and early 20th centuries. As seen above, most of these materials are irrelevant to the Book of Mormon issues anyway, but to the extent they are probative, serious up-to-date data should be consulted.

Linguistics. Roberts' questions about how rapidly languages may change or become extinct can be addressed today by competent linguists. We are reminded of the rapid and total disappearance of languages and cultures in other parts of the world when we look to studies of the Etruscans, Minoan Linear B script, and the complete and precipitous demise of Ugaritic and Eblaite. By analogy, the Nephite language and its script(s) could have vanished without leaving much of a trace.

Of course, it is possible that some trace was left. Roberts quotes one Dellenbaugh as claiming that "No authentic trace of any Old World language thus far has been found on this (the American) continent" (p. 87). But the evidence has not yet been seriously examined on this issue. As Brian Stubbs' detailed comparison of Hebrew and Uto-Aztecan has recently shown, such studies are quite possible and may offer several linguistically significant factors. Professor Otto Sadovsky of the University of California at Riverside has identified a substantial cluster of cognates between the Penutian language family on the California coast and the Ob-Ugric branch of Uralic of western Siberia, although one must await further reports to confirm the extent of this linguistic connection (experts such as Raimo Antilla and Werner Wenter are already hailing Sadovsky's work).

Near Eastern Culture. The claim that "the particulars in which the Americans are shown to resemble any given people in the Old World are insignificant" (p. 88) is refuted in John L. Sorenson's "The Significance of an Apparent Relationship Between the Ancient Near East and Mesoamerica," in Man Across the Sea: Problems of Pre-Columbian Contacts (F.A.R.M.S. Reprint SOR-71). He gives a substantial list of specific, documented cultural parallels between Mesoamerica and the Near East, preceded by a rigorous theoretical discussion of the scientific methods one must cautiously bear in mind in interpreting this data.

B. Does the Book of Mormon Mention Things not Present in the Western Hemisphere before Columbus?

Roberts next asks (pp. 96-115) whether there were domesticated horses, asses, oxen, cows, sheep, goats and swine,

as well as wheat, barley, silk, cotton, and wheeled vehicles on the Western Hemisphere before Columbus. The Book of Mormon wording seems to say there were. Likewise, can steel bows and cimeters be dated back to the time of Lehi in the seventh century B.C.? In many of these cases, good evidence now exists that the Book of Mormon is not anachronistic in reporting that such things existed in pre-Columbian America. In those other cases where conclusive evidence is lacking, it is possible to believe that the archaeological record is simply incomplete or that the problem can be explained in other ways. For a good discussion of the problem of fragmentary archaeological evidence in general, see E. Yamauchi, "The Greek Words in Daniel in the Light of Greek Influence in the Near East," in J. Payne, ed., New Perspectives on the Old Testament (Waco, Texas: Word Books), pp. 170-74.

Animals. These are discussed at length in Sorenson, pp. 288-99. See also F.A.R.M.S. Update June 1984, "Once More: The Horse." For example, on the horse, the Post-Classic site of Mayapan, excavated in 1957, yielded the remains of horses at a depth of 2 meters; they were considered by the zoologist studying them to be pre-Columbian. See C. E. Ray, "Pre-Columbian Horses from Yucatan," Journal of Mammalogy, 38 (1957), 278; H. E. D. Pollock and C. E. Ray, "Notes on Vertebrate Animal Remains from Mayapan," Current Reports, 41 (1957), 638 [Carnegie Institution, Washington D.C., Dept. of Archaeology]. One is not always certain what to make of this kind of evidence, but from Roberts' perspective the mere presence of such fragmentary data would undoubtedly have improved considerably his bleak assessment of the prospects as he saw them.

Again, we do well also to avoid reading more into the Book of Mormon than is actually there. For example, horses are not mentioned very often in the Book of Mormon: Domesticated (?) horses are mentioned only in Enos 21 (in the Land of Nephi), and in Alma 18-20 (Land of Nephi, and belonging only to the King). In 3 Ne. 3:22, 4:4 and 6:1, horses are listed among the provisions of the people (perhaps even as an animal used for meat), but apparently they were not ridden (since the people going forth with these animals still "marched," 3 Ne. 3:22). It is curious that in Eth. 9:19 (a passing reference by Moroni in his summary of Jaredite history, which may or may not be historically reliable--how much did Moroni know about Jaredite animals?) the horse was said to be less useful than an elephant or a curelom or a cumom! Were these "horses," then, some other species of horse than the extremely useful ones we know today? And even if they had horses as we know them, they apparently did not know how to use them very well (which, by the way, compares with experience of Europe, where it was not until after the Middle Ages that people finally figured out how to make a plow harness for a horse that would not choke the animal). The only other references to horses in the Book of Mormon are in Isaiah texts (Isa. 2:7, 5:28), or prophetic texts (3 Ne. 21:14). There is one reference to wild horses (1 Ne. 18:25).

Plants. These are discussed in Sorenson, pp. 184-86. Note particularly, in addition, the F.A.R.M.S. Update December 1984,

"Barley in Ancient America." This reports archaeology's recent discovery of what is apparently pre-Columbian cultivated barley, coming from the Hohokam sites in Arizona. This significant find was also reported in Science 83.

Another striking example is the obscure term sheum found in Mos. 9:9 as some sort of food plant. What would Roberts have said had he known that sheum is precisely the most popular ancient Mesopotamian cereal name? See "Nephite Weights and Measures in the Time of Mosiah II," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report STF-83, for details on this and on other little-known features of the Nephite grain-measure system and its striking parallels to related Egyptian metrology.

Technology. Roberts also asked questions about metals in Mesoamerica, cimeters, wheels and rudders. On the wheel, see Sorenson, "Wheeled Figurines in Ancient America," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report, SOR-81. Note here again that the Book of Mormon never mentions the word "wheel." Only "chariots" are mentioned, and even those are mentioned rarely, in Alma 18-20 (as belonging to the King) and in 3 Ne. 3:22 (where the people still "march"). Since the word for "chariot" in Hebrew is merkavah, literally just meaning a "riding thing," it is possible that Nephite chariots were just about any kind of riding thing (not necessarily wheeled). Moreover, we may simply be dealing here with another case of lost technology. See F.A.R.M.S. Update July 1985, "Lost Arts." For example, knowledge of the wheel was lost during the Middle Ages in Arabia. See R. W. Gulliet, Camel and the Wheel (Cambridge: Harvard, 1975). On the potter's wheel, in addition to the July 1985 Update, close inspection of ancient pots by craftsmen who accompanied the F.A.R.M.S. 1984 tour to Mexico and Guatemala led some to the conclusion that the pots had been turned on some sort of wheels.

On cimeters, or curved swords, a recent research report by William Hamblin on Book of Mormon warfare and weapons thoroughly documents and illustrates several such curved weapons from the ancient Near East, Egypt and Mesoamerica, dating to before Book of Mormon times. This report, entitled "Handheld Weapons in the Book of Mormon," is available from F.A.R.M.S. (HAM-85).

On steel, see Sorenson, pp. 278-88. See also Sorenson, "A Reconsideration of Early Metal in Mesoamerica," F.A.R.M.S. Reprint SOR-82b. Much has been written about carburized iron (steel) in the ancient Near East; see, for example, R. J. Forbes, Studies in Ancient Technology: Metallurgy in Antiquity, Part 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1972); J. D. Muhly, "How Iron Technology Changed the Ancient World," Biblical Archaeology Review, Nov/Dec 1982, pp. 41-54. On the degree of sophistication now observable in the craftsmanship of ancient Mesoamerican metallurgists, see H. Lechtman, "Pre-Columbian Surface Metallurgy," Scientific American (June 1984), pp. 56-63. The Near Eastern studies show that steel was indeed well known in the ancient Near East to such an extent that the "Iron Age" may be considered a misnomer: it was really a Steel Age (pot iron is too soft to make useful tools or weapons). Indeed, a beautiful iron-bladed dagger with an inlaid gold hilt (matching the general description of the sword of Laban) was found in King Tutankhamen's tomb.

But here again we must beware not to assume a higher degree of expertise or wider usage for metals than the Book of Mormon actually calls for. For example, the Lamanites used metals much less frequently than the Nephites. Beside references in Isaiah, and the phrase "iron rod" (which only occurs in the Old World accounts of Nephi), iron is mentioned only in 2 Nephi 5 (in the Land of Nephi), in Jarom 8 (in the Land of Nephi), in Mosiah 11 (in the Land of Nephi), and by Moroni in Ether 10 (attributing the use of iron to the Jaredites). Iron is thus primarily localized in the land of Nephi. Steel is almost exclusively an Old World item in the Book of Mormon (Nephi's steel bow and Laban's steel sword both came from the Old World). A good argument can be made that shortly after Nephi taught his people the secret processes of metal working (2 Ne. 5:15; see generally J. Tvedtnes, "Was Lehi a Caravaneer," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report TVE-84) this technology was lost. (Jarom 8 dates to about 387 B.C., not 200 B.C., as Roberts estimates, p. 108). Steel is never mentioned again in Nephite culture after the reference in Jarom 8. It is only elliptically mentioned by Moroni in Ether 7:9. Thus, Roberts is overstating the text when he asserts that "throughout the Nephite period, as well as throughout the Jaredite period, an iron and steel culture . . . is found" (p. 122).

On rudders, I am unaware of any archaeological evidence confirming a knowledge of rudders, but the idea is simple enough that one should not discount the likelihood that they were known where long-distance voyaging was conducted. Again, the text does not necessarily imply any knowledge of rudders, only an awareness of the precarious situation of vessels without steering devices. If these people did not have much knowledge of shipbuilding, they would think of a vessel "without anything with which to steer her" as helpless, if not unhelpable, indeed. The Jaredite barges apparently were rudderless; it is open to speculation what kinds of family memories about sea-faring were handed down among the Nephites even after they lost any connection with the sea.

Other similar points could be made, but since many of Roberts' quotes are redundant, there is no need to repeat the responses.

Part II. Internal Evidence that the Book of Mormon is of Human Origin--Considered (pp. 251-319).

This section of the book presents Roberts' worries over what he saw as blunders or absurdities in the Book of Mormon. These must be examined on several levels. The first question to ask is whether in fact they are blunders or absurdities. Often what on first glance seems to be an error turns out to be profoundly accurate. Second to ask "so what?" even should there be textual or other errors. Did not Mormon, Nephi and Moroni expect that there would be errors? All books contain typographical and other minor errors. Studies itself is no exception. The faults are readily acknowledged in the Book of Mormon as "mistakes of men."

Furthermore, these errors may have entered the text at many stages: Mormon himself may have copied a word incorrectly which Joseph faithfully so translated, or on other occasions Joseph

could have paraphrased or translated a passage loosely. As Roberts elsewhere insists (New Witnesses for God, vol. 3, pp. 414, 438) Joseph Smith undoubtedly had considerable discretion as he selected phrases or words from his own vocabulary through which to render the ideas which came to him in the translation process. For a useful discussion of what we know about how this translation process worked, see Stephen Ricks, "Joseph Smith's Means and Methods of Translating the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report RIC-84. Much more textual study will be required before several questions about the nature of the Book of Mormon translation can be discussed intelligently. Beyond whatever that research may find, one must finally ask: If five "mistakes" prove that the book is entirely of human origin, what do five precise ancient "accuracies" unknown to the world in 1830 prove?

As the following discussion shows, the blunders which Roberts rhetorically asks us to consider do little damage to the credibility of the text, and in several cases they have exactly the opposite effect.

Chapter 1. Is there a Want of Perspective in the Book of Mormon Travel Accounts?

From Jerusalem to the Red Sea. Roberts wonders if it is possible to journey in three days from Jerusalem to near the shores of the Red Sea. (p. 251) As Roberts observes, it is 170 miles from Jerusalem to the Gulf of Aqaba. This is a lot of ground for Lehi's family to cover, especially if one assumes (as Roberts does) that they travelled on foot (p. 251). There is no reason, however, to assume that they were without camels. See H. Nibley, Lehi in the Desert (Bookcraft, 1951), and An Approach to the Book of Mormon (Deseret, 1957). Moreover, Lehi was fleeing for his life and would have moved quickly, perhaps pushing his animals day and night far harder than under normal conditions.

But more than that, the text does not necessarily say that his journey was three days from Jerusalem to the Red Sea, as Roberts assumes. The journey began at Lehi's house (1 Ne. 2:4), which, from Jerusalem, was "down" into another land called the land of the family's inheritance (1 Ne. 3:22), which could have been some distance south of the city of Jerusalem. From there the family went "into the wilderness" (1 Ne. 2:4), and from there they traveled "three days in the wilderness" (1 Ne. 2:6). Significant distinctions were made in ancient Israel between settled lands, legal lands, the "promised land" or Yahweh's land, and "wilderness." See Elizabeth Wood, "Settled and Wilderness Lands in the Bible and the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. Archive 1981. Thus, those three days spent by Lehi "in the wilderness" may not have begun until he left the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of Judah, or the Promised Land, wherever that boundary was thought to be. Since the Israelites feared and respected the "wilderness," Lehi could be expected to have taken particular note of his entry into that territory and of the distance traveled therein. The distance covered on those three days thus becomes quite reasonable, whether we are thinking in terms of a hard and fast three days by camel from the hills of Judah to

Akaba on the Red Sea, or from Akaba southward into Arabia along the coastal route.

Since Roberts was obviously interested in the geography of the Near East and its relationship to the travels of Lehi, he undoubtedly would find two recent publications of considerable interest. These works adduce from the Book of Mormon exact details about Arabia--one of the "least-known areas of the world"--which "no one knew in the 1820s" (and, I would add, which few people knew even in the 1920s). See Eugene England, "Through the Arabian Desert to a Bountiful Land: Could Joseph Smith Have Known the Way?" in N. Reynolds, ed., Book of Mormon Authorship (BYU Religious Studies Center, 1982), pp. 144-156, F.A.R.M.S. Reprint ENG-82, and Lynn and Hope Hilton, In Search of Lehi's Trail (Deseret, 1976). Rather than lacking travel perspective, the Book of Mormon comes out looking very good.

Roberts wondered whether Lehi's group was too small to carry all its tents, provisions and supplies (p. 252). Of course he is still assuming that they were on foot, which we have shown is unwarranted.

Domesticated Animals on Arrival. Roberts is troubled that Lehi's party found "beasts in the forests of every kind, both the cow and the ox, and the ass and the horse, and the goat and the wild goat, and all manner of wild animals" (1 Ne. 18:25). If they found domesticated animals in America, where did they come from? (p. 252). Roberts argues that these animals could not have come from Jaredite times, because Lehi landed in Chile and the Jaredites were farther north. With more evidence and better tools, John Sorenson presents a plausible case that Lehi's landing was fairly close to Jaredite territory and accepts the undeniable archaeological record that there were in fact inhabitants throughout the Western Hemisphere virtually wherever you go 580 B.C. Thus, all kinds of animals, domesticated and domesticatable, could have been on the land. Furthermore, Nephi does not say that any of these animals were domesticated when they were first found.

Nephite and Jaredite Parallels. Roberts sees another possible "absurdity" in parallels between the accounts of the Nephite and Jaredite migrations and their destructions. This may be easily accounted for in several ways: First, we must remember that it was Moroni who wrote the Book of Ether. He did not give a full account of the history of the Jaredites (Eth. 1:5) but only selected certain specific materials as he looked back on the fates of these and his own people. The same thing that had happened to the Jaredites had now happened to his own people, and naturally he would tend to stress the similarities (and possibly even be responsible for adding or shaping a few). Furthermore, Moroni was working from King Mosiah's translation. There is no evidence that Moroni retranslated the 24 gold plates of Ether. See John Welch, "The Sources Behind the Book of Ether," F.A.R.M.S. Archive 1985. It is possible that Mosiah may have introduced some "Nephite" elements into this record as he translated it into the Nephite language for his people, since he immediately used the text for political purposes.

As for Roberts' suggestion that the Robber Wars of the Book of Helaman are shallow, see the detailed account of laws and practices relevant to ancient bands of robbers, stunningly well-represented in the Book of Mormon, in John Welch, "Theft and Robbery in the Book of Mormon and Ancient Near Eastern Law," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report WEL-85a.

Second, the parallels between the Jaredite and Nephite histories are not that great. Roberts suggests, for example, that there might be some connection between the Liahona and the sixteen shining stones. But the Liahona was a director; the stones only illuminators. For a significant treatment of both in ancient lore one should see H. Nibley, "Strange Ships and Shining Stones," and "The Liahona's Cousins," both in the Improvement Era, and as F.A.R.M.S. Reprints N-STR, N-LIA. Surely the prohibition against kindling fire in the desert has no conceivable connection with the unimaginability of having open fires inside one of the Jaredite ships, which were air-"tight." Of what concern is the general fact that both transported seeds and animals?

Was the Jaredite journey too long? It lasted 344 days, which is within the known limits for trans-Pacific drifting without sails. Since we have no idea which ocean currents were followed or whether there were delays along the way, it is impossible to check this figure further. As to the fact that the Jaredite barges have been "an incident ridiculed by nearly every writer against the Book of Mormon," Roberts gave his answers in New Witnesses for God, vol. 3, pp. 543-49.

Were elephants in the barges!? Roberts claims that "There is no reason for excluding them" (p. 258). Yet elephants are not mentioned until Ether 9:19, five long generations after the arrival of the Jaredites. One can assume, therefore, that the Jaredites found the elephants on the land after they arrived, rather than bringing them with them. One should consider Ludwell Johnson, "Man and Elephants in America," Scientific Monthly, F.A.R.M.S. Reprint JOH-52, and Sorenson, pp. 297-8.

Chapter 2. Are there Absurdities in Subsequent Nephite and Jaredite History?

Temple Building. Roberts raises a question about the ability of the Nephites to build a temple "after the manner of the temple of Solomon" shortly after their arrival in their Promised Land (2 Ne 5:16). He questions that the group may have been too small to build such a temple (p. 259ff). After all, it took many years and the wealth of the entire Israelite kingdom to build Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, as Roberts himself writes in New Witness (1909), vol. 3, pp. 522-3. Nevertheless, Roberts goes on at length in the 1922 Study rehearsing to the reader the dimensions and opulence of that temple. But nothing in the Book of Mormon requires us to believe that the Nephite temple was the same size as the temple in Jerusalem. The text simply says it was built "after the manner" of that temple. Archaeologists have indeed recently found several small Israelite temples in early sites in Palestine constructed "after the manner" of the temple in Jerusalem. One nearly to scale but smaller is at Tel Arad and

was contemporary with Solomon's Temple. One is at Beer-sheba; others are at Leontopolis and Elephantine in Egypt. It was previously thought that the only legitimate temple recognized in ancient Israel was the one in Jerusalem (and thus the building of the Nephite temple was thought to be illegal or inappropriate). Now we know that quite the opposite was the case: building a mini-temple functionally and structurally like the temple of Solomon was in Jewish tradition acceptable indeed--something Joseph Smith would not have known.

Naturally, the Nephite temple was not so opulent as the temple of Solomon. Roberts seems troubled, however, with the explanation, for right after reporting that iron, copper, brass, steel, gold, silver and precious ores were in great abundance (2 Ne. 5:15), the text states (5:16) that the Nephite temple was "not built of so many precious things; for they were not to be found upon the land" (p. 260). Is there a problem here? Certainly not. A simple reading of Exodus 35-39 shows the kind of wealth that went into the Tabernacle; even greater wealth went into Solomon's temple: 29 talents, 730 shekels of gold; 100 talents, 1785 shekels of silver (Ex. 38:24-25). Surely Nephi could have found ore in great abundance without finding that Solomonic quantity of gold and silver. Furthermore, when the ancient Near Eastern tribute lists speak of gold, silver, and "precious things," the latter phrase often has reference to "precious gems." So when Nephi says that his temple was not built with "so many precious things," he may simply be saying that he could not find so many "precious stones." In building the Tabernacle, the following stones were used: onyx (Ex. 35:27), sardius, topaz, carbuncle, emerald, sapphire, diamond, ligure, agate, amethyst, beryl, onyx, and jasper (Ex. 39:10-13). Thus Nephi's statement is quite acceptable, as Roberts himself concluded in 1909 on similar grounds. New Witnesses for God, vol. 3, pp. 522-23.

Kingship. Both the Nephites and the Jaredites feel the need to have a king, although the groups are still very small. Is this reasonable? It is, in light of the importance of kingship in the ancient world. Ancient society was sacral, and the king's function in this world was central. See, e.g., H. Nibley, "The Hierocentric State," Western Political Quarterly, F.A.R.M.S. Reprint N-HIE; John Sorenson, An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon, pp. 227-32; Gordon Thomasson, "Mosiah: The Complex Symbolism and the Symbolic Complex of Kingship in the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report TSN-82; John Sroka, "The King's Coronation: An Ancient Temple Ceremony" F.A.R.M.S. Archive. A society in antiquity had need of a king to fill standard and important religious as well as political functions and expectations, no matter how small it was.

It is true that both Nephi and the sons of the brother of Jared were reluctant to be king. Nephi had his own reasons, which may reflect the anti-monarchical sentiments well-known to ancient Israel, see R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 94, or may also reflect his personal attitudes about the kings he knew in Jerusalem (Jehoiakim, Zedekiah) who opposed Lehi, Jeremiah, and prophets like Uriah (Jer. 26). The Jaredite opposition to

kingship may reflect a hostile reaction against the Mesopotamian king under whose reign that society collapsed, or it may be that we see reflected here King Mosiah II's influence as translator of the 24 Plates, for we know that Mosiah opposed kingship on the grounds that it leads to "bondage" (Mos. 29:17-20), just as the brother of Jared argues "surely this thing leadeth into captivity" (Eth. 6:23). Perhaps Mosiah found his own attitudes reinforced by the Jaredite text; perhaps he was influenced by that text; perhaps he let his own feeling show through (consciously or unconsciously) in translating the text.

To some extent great faith was found in both groups. But apart from the visions of the Brother of Jared, there was actually little of heroic fidelity in the Jaredite record. Thus, when Moroni lists the deeds of faith in Ether 12:12-19 he draws them from the lives of Alma, Amulek, Lehi, Nephi and the Nephite disciples, rather than from the Jaredites.

Chapter 3. Are the Similarities between Sherem, Nehor, Korihor Too Great?

Three individuals receive particular attention in the Book of Mormon as opponents to the Nephite establishment: Sherem (Jacob 7); Nehor (Alma 1); Korihor (Alma 30). They are characterized by being learned in language, denying Christ, bringing charges against the Nephite religious leaders, misleading the people, doubting that one can know the future, denying the scriptures, being asked "believest thou the scriptures?", being hesitant to answer (the Nephite leader is hesitant to invoke the power of God in the face of the challenger's sign seeking), being accused of blasphemy, finally offering a confession, suffering an ignominious death--after which the people return to righteousness. Roberts worries that "evidently it might be urged" that "the same amateurish spirit" does not characterize these narratives (pp. 266-7; the underlines words were handwritten by Roberts on the manuscript but erroneously do not appear in the printed version). "Does it not carry with it," he queries, "the proof that it is the work of a pious youth dealing with the very common place stock arguments clumsily put together?" (p. 271). Roberts should have added Zeezrom to this list (Alma 11-14).

The similarities between the arguments of Nehor, Zeezrom and Korihor, however, are easy to explain. Nehor founded a religious order, which, it appears, was most popular among the Mulekites. Its political power base appears to have been in Ammonihah, for it was known as the Desolation of Nehors when it was destroyed in Alma 16. Zeezrom was "after the order and faith of Nehor" (Alma 14:16); and we know that there were "lawyers, judges, priests and teachers, who were of the profession of Nehor" also in Ammonihah (Alma 14:18). Korihor is never expressly said to belong to this order, but it appears quite obvious that he was; his name may reveal a Mulekite connection, and when he derides Nephite traditions he does not call them the traditions of "our fathers" but of "your" or "their fathers" (Alma 30:27, 31). He also comes "into the land of Zarahemla" (30:6) and tries to convert the Ammonites (30:19), people with whom the Nehors had had dealings before (24:29). Thus, these three men talk the same because they are of the same persuasion and training.

Korihor's arguments are not shallow: rather they distill virtually every main philosophical, epistemological, humanistic, economic, psychological or other such argument generally raised against religion. His case was in fact well briefed and powerfully argued. See also Chauncy Riddle, "Korihor: The Arguments of Apostasy," Ensign, F.A.R.M.S. Reprint RID-77; John Rozier, "The Trial of Korihor," F.A.R.M.S. Archive.

Sherem's interest, however, is much different: He does not oppose religion. He is a purist. He wishes to live the law of Moses "which is the right way," and resists the interjection of the worship of the future messiah into the religion (Jacob 7:7). It is Sherem who accuses Jacob of blasphemy (7:7), not Sherem (like Korihor) who is accused. In effect, Sherem receives the judgment of God for accusing Jacob falsely. Under Israelite law false accusers were made to suffer as their accused would have suffered had the accusation stood up (Deut. 19:16-21). These and many other differences make Sherem's case not only distinguishable but more understandable. These ancient legal concepts behind these trials and other passages in the Book of Mormon show subtle and important ways in which the Book of Mormon reflects ancient Near Eastern culture--ways one would not expect if the book were merely "amateurish."

Many of the procedural similarities between these cases can be attributed to ancient Israelite law. For example, it was normal for the court to seek a confession before executing a guilty person, whether voluntarily (as in Sherem's and Korihor's cases) or involuntarily (as in Nehor's case). Publishing the results of the trial through heralding the case publically (e.g. Alma 30:57) was also standard ancient legal procedure. These and other details will be discussed elsewhere, but they show the differences as well as ancient elements present in these trials.

Of course, it is also the case that ancient histories reported events in patterns, typologies and formulae. Herodotus and Plutarch do this frequently. One would not expect the Book of Mormon to be both an ancient text and a totally sophisticated history by modern standards.

Chapter 4. Further Book of Mormon Absurdities.

Battle Scenes. Are the Book of Mormon battle accounts repetitive? Well, there are equally glaring repetitions present in the battle accounts of the Iliad. More than that, the Book of Mormon battle accounts comport well with ancient Near Eastern military practices. See the subsequent installments of William Hamblin's report on Warfare in the Book of Mormon; also compare, for example, Book of Mormon military practices with R. de Vaux, "Military Institutions" in Ancient Israel (New York: McGraw Hill, 1965), pp. 213-67; e.g. de Vaux' account of the nes, "ensign" p. 227 with Captain Moroni's pole (Alma 46:13).

Is it just a "wonder-tale" that no young Nephite warrior in Helaman's force of 2060 striplings was killed, although many were wounded? At least one should notice that the Israelite military-preference was to fight in small groups of picked men, in a state of ritual purity, believing that God would march at the head of such a vanguard; see de Vaux, Ancient Israel, pp. 217, 258-59.

Such small armies in ancient Israel are often said to have won without many, if any, casualties (Judg. 18:11, 1 Sam. 14:1-23).

Strange Expressions. There are some expressions which Roberts thought (p. 273) were strange: The "chief captains, all those who were not slain(!) came forth." They did "gather all their substance, save it were their land(!), into one place" (3 Ne. 3:13). They did "gather all the people . . . who had not been slain(!)" (Eth. 15:12). They say that if a "wine would poison a Lamanite, it would also poison a Nephite" (Alma 55). Do these require comment? See also New Witnesses, vol. 3, pp. 424-25.

How could Moroni write to the leaders of a republic and accuse them of "idly sitting on their thrones" (Alma 60)? The answer is that the Nephite "republic" (it is never called that in the Book of Mormon text) was not a republic in the modern sense of the word. See Richard Bushman, "The Book of Mormon and the American Revolution," BYU Studies (1976), F.A.R.M.S. Reprint BUS-76; John Welch, "Old World Perspectives on the Book of Mormon," Ensign (Sept. 1976), F.A.R.M.S. Reprint WEL-76. The leader of the Nephite nation still sat on a judgment-seat, was still a governor, and undoubtedly still had a throne to sit on when officiating in his office.

Regarding the episode in Alma 46, where Moroni tears his coat and writes on it a battle standard known as the Title of Liberty, Roberts was troubled that the 1830 Edition (and we can add also the Printer's Manuscript--there is a lacuna in the Original Manuscript where this phrase appears) of the Book of Mormon says that Moroni went around waving the "rent of his coat" in the air. Roberts sees this as an absurdity, since indeed in English one cannot wave "the rent" itself but only a torn part. In English "rent" is simply not used this way. What Roberts needed here, however, was a simple lesson in Hebrew. Commenting on this verse, John Tvedtnes explains: "Hebrew would, in this instance, use but one word [i.e. "rent," not "rent part"], gera', "rent (part)," coming from gara', "he rent, tore," for nouns in Hebrew are derived from roots--as are Hebrew verbs--by the addition of certain vowel patterns that distinguish them from other parts of speech." John Tvedtnes, "Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon," BYU Studies 11 (1970), 51, F.A.R.M.S. Reprint CRW-82. In other words, in Hebrew one cannot say "rent part," but rather one simply forms a noun from the root "rent," precisely as is done in Alma 46. In the Hebrew Bible the word gera'im (meaning "rent-part," "rags," or "torn-garment") appears four times in this fashion: in 1 Kings 11:30-31 and 2 Kings 2:12 it is translated by the KJV as "pieces," and in Prov. 23:21 as "rags." "Rent" appears in KJV Isa. 3:24, but the Hebrew word (nigpa, "rope, cord" = LXX ochionio) is different. Also, Joseph Smith would probably not have known the meaning of the word "rent" as a noun (as it appears in Alma 46) from any biblical expression accessible to him. Rather this "problem" turns into "good evidence for the authenticity of the translation," according to Tvedtnes. (In addition, the account in Alma 46 seems right on target when it associates this torn coat with the coat of Joseph, which in English is called "the coat of many colors," but which

in Hebrew may be called "the coat of many pieces." See also H. Nibley, Approach, ch. 17; F.A.R.M.S. Reprint N-APP-17).

The tearing of Moroni's coat is viewed, in Roberts' worst-case analysis, as "dramatically heroic enough to satisfy the wildest desire of a pious boy of fervid imagination." No doubt it is dramatic, as one would expect of an account written by one general, General Mormon, of his hero Captain Moroni, whom Mormon idealized as the greatest Nephite leader ever known and after whom he had named his son. What Roberts lacks for his analysis, however, is information about ancient Near Eastern and Israelite warfare. Moroni's tearing of his coat and requiring his soldiers to take upon them an oath of loyalty, with the penalty that if they do not fight well they will be torn even as the coat was torn, was standard Near Eastern military practice, according to de Vaux. See his Ancient Israel, pp. 214-228. Saul did something similar as he symbolically cut to pieces a yoke of oxen and sent pieces to all the Israelite cities with the threat: "Whoever does not follow Saul to battle will have his own oxen treated in the same way." de Vaux, p. 215. (1 Sam. 11:7). Moroni's use of the pole resembles the Near Eastern nes, or battle-pole, see de Vaux, p. 227, and the use of battle ensigns or flags with religious significance has long been documented in Israel from materials from the Dead Sea Scrolls. See H. Nibley, "A Strange Order of Battle," Approach to the Book of Mormon, ch. 17, F.A.R.M.S. Reprint N-APP-17. A comprehensive study of pre-technical warfare in the Book of Mormon and the ancient Near East (the first chapter is now available from F.A.R.M.S.) by William Hamblin, will provide further details explaining the Book of Mormon military affairs in light of archaeological and historical findings. As for "petty errors in grammar and the faulty use of words" generally, Roberts easily ascribed these problems to Joseph Smith and not to God in 1909 (cited by Brigham Madsen, p. 31, n. 27.)

Biblical Parallels. Roberts also mentions very briefly the fact that certain Book of Mormon accounts resemble biblical materials. For example, Matthew's star at the birth of Jesus; Zechariah's "day and a night and a day"; John's "tarry until I come"; Matthew's "faith of a mustard seed;" and Moses' "departure"--a variant of each is found in Book of Mormon materials. Certainly, Joseph Smith's use of biblical words, phrases, images, types and pericopes in his translation of the Book of Mormon deserves study. That task is immense, partly because literally thousands of biblical phrases appear throughout the Book of Mormon. They were apparently an inseparable part of Joseph Smith's working vocabulary. What they individually or collectively mean is yet to be determined.

A Ridiculous Prophecy? Roberts seems embarrassed by the Book of Mormon prophecy that the Indians or the "remnant of Jacob" will rage like a lion among the Gentiles. People in the nineteenth century might have believed this, Roberts suggests some may argue, "but it is scarcely possible now to entertain such conceptions of native race terror, triumph, and domination over the Gentile nation of the United States." (p. 182). Beside

the possibility that the prophecy may mean something else which will yet come to pass, did this (or any of these many arguments) represent Roberts' own opinion? That they did not is shown first by Roberts' assertion that this argument could be advanced "by one disposed to criticize the Book of Mormon" (p. 182), and second by Roberts' own powerful conviction that the Book of Mormon had prophesied profoundly about the future of America. To this effect, see his Conference Address, April 1933, only five months before his death.

Chapters 5-6. Nineteenth Century Conversion Accounts.

Roberts voices the objection that Lehi's vision in 1 Nephi 1 resembles nineteenth century conversion accounts (p. 284). One can understand why Roberts would not have recognized the ancient throne theophany and prophetic commission pattern which is so consistently discernable now in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, since much of this literature has only recently been rediscovered. See Blake Ostler, "The Throne Theophany and Prophetic Commission in 1 Nephi," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report OST-82, publication forthcoming in BYU Studies. These ancient visions fit Lehi's vision far closer than do the nineteenth century conversion accounts. Roberts, however, should have taken note of materials in Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 1-11 which are more closely related to 1 Ne. 1 than are the nineteenth century conversion accounts.

Roberts finds two broad elements in these conversions which he thinks are particularly striking. First is the fact that converts were overcome by the divine experience and fell to the ground in the nineteenth century, as do some Book of Mormon individuals. Clearly, this was also experienced anciently, as is well illustrated in Ezek. 3:23, 9:8, 11:13. The ritual falling to the earth in King Benjamin's Speech seems closely associated with the practices of ancient Israelite New Year festivals. See John Welch, compiler, "King Benjamin's Speech in Light of Ancient Israelite Festivals" (F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report 1985), and H. Nibley, "Old World Ritual in the New World" Approach, ch. 23, F.A.R.M.S. Reprint N-APP-23.

Second is the fact that converts worried and cried out about their sinful state in the nineteenth century, as do individuals in the Book of Mormon (by the way, not including Lehi). But is this not also ancient and Biblical? In Isaiah 6:5-7 a similar reaction is shown in a biblical setting: "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Other examples can be readily produced.

Beyond seeing that these two elements are at home in the ancient world, two further steps should be taken beyond Roberts' cursory thoughts. One is to ask whether there are elements in the Book of Mormon conversions that differ from the nineteenth century accounts. The answer to this query is that there are. The conversions or prophetic commissions of Lehi, Enos and others arise from their intercessory prayer--as they are praying on behalf of their people, not seeking conversion themselves. Alma

the Younger did not even ask at all, and was visited by the "angel of the Lord" (a pre-Exilic appellation). These differences weaken the proposed parallels considerably.

The other query is to ask whether these differences find parallels in the recently discovered materials, such as in the Pseudepigrapha. For example, the intercessory prayer is a common part of this now understood prophetic-call motif. Ostler, "Throne Theophany," p. 18. Obviously, there will be some similarities between ancient and modern spiritual experiences; these may account for some of the basic commonality between what Roberts found in the nineteenth century and what occurred in the Book of Mormon. But that does not impugn the Book of Mormon.

None of Roberts' other points seem well-taken. He points to the fact that nineteenth century conversions were highly emotional, referring to "that manner of hysterical conversion" which Roberts assumed (perhaps erroneously) was "so common to the time and place of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon" (p. 291). The reader may satisfy him or herself, but I see little in the Book of Mormon in the way of "hysterical conversion" or even ecstatic prophecy (which was indeed known in ancient Israel, see H. Wheeler Robinson, Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament [Oxford, 1946], pp. 180ff). Furthermore, it is not as if Joseph Smith approved of such spiritual excesses, for he did not condone them in Kirtland in 1831. E.g. D&C 43. Benjamin's speech is liturgical, not "hysterical"; Lamoni's conversion is gripping, tense, but not "hysterical." Although the people react emotionally when the birth-star of Jesus appears, and indeed they gush out tears (3 Ne. 4:31-33) when they execute Zemnarihah (the leader of the Gadianton Robbers), yet these are not conversion stories but accounts of deliverance from impending physical injury. The precise details of the ancient Israelite backgrounds of the execution of leaders of bands of highwaymen or robbers who plagued ancient civilizations show that these Book of Mormon accounts fit much more exactly in the setting of antiquity. See John W. Welch, "Theft and Robbery in the Book of Mormon and Ancient Near Eastern Law," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report WEL-85a, and "The Execution of Zemnarihah," F.A.R.M.S. Update, December 1984.

Are not the ecstatic utterances such as "Hosanna to the Most High God; Blessed be the name of the Lord God Almighty, the Most High God" (3 Ne. 4:33) at home in the ancient world? "And they cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 6:3). Indeed, the blessing chanted in 3 Ne. 4 was ritually spoken in praise of God for delivering his people from their enemies. The closest parallel here--far more closely related than the nineteenth century sources--may be Melchizedek's blessing: "Blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand" (Gen. 14:20).

Is a recognition of the grace of God only a Protestant concept? Indeed not. The Hebrew hesed is usually translated "mercy," but it "may often be rendered 'grace,'" as, for example, Wheeler Robinson's chapter on "Grace and Repentance" in the Old Testament amply demonstrates. Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, pp. 57-62. According to the Old Testament, God's mercy and His righteousness (grace and justice) were consummate

virtues both manifested by God concurrently (see, e.g., Hos. 2:19-20). Similarly, the Book of Mormon sees God as being both just and merciful, as saving by grace (mercy) "after all one can do" (justice), etc. On the other hand, the typical nineteenth century conversions listed by Roberts precisely lack this kind of balance, placing almost exclusive emphasis on the grace of God.

The parallels that Roberts cites between the experiences of Joseph Smith and the early Church in the 1830s may be equally trivial, but it is beyond the scope of this memorandum to comment on them since they have no direct bearing on what is found in the the Book of Mormon itself.

Part III. Roberts' Comparison of the Book of Mormon with Ethan Smith's View of the Hebrews

The largest portion of Studies (pp. 149-250, 321-344) prints Roberts' papers discussing parallels between Ethan Smith's 1823 View of the Hebrews (VH) and the Book of Mormon. In these papers Roberts writes relentlessly and bluntly as he constructs the possible argument that the Book of Mormon relied upon VH, based on twenty-six similarities between these two books. He makes no effort to soften their impact, but rather intensifies the issue by frequent reference to the cumulative effect of these points.

There are several ways to respond to Roberts' construct:

1) If we are to believe that Joseph Smith knew VH well enough to follow it in the kind of detail that Roberts suggests, and if we are to believe that Joseph Smith accepted VH as authoritative enough to use it as the fundamental structural guide to his composition of the Book of Mormon, then why is the Book of Mormon inconsistent with or ignorant of so many of its most important details? In other words, if 26 vague similarities prove dependency, what do over 80 glaring differences prove?

2) How significant are the parallels anyway? Are they specific or general? If they are general, is there any reason to believe that Joseph Smith borrowed them specifically from Ethan Smith? Or from the many others in the 1820s who were making similar general statements? Indeed, many people held some of the beliefs reflected in VH long before, during, and after the 1820s. Moreover, since the similarities turn out to be very general, it is easy enough to believe that he did not borrow them from anyone at all.

The preceding two points will be developed and demonstrated below. Differing approaches are viable, as others too have argued.

3) One should consider how likely it really is that Joseph Smith actually depended on VH. There is no concrete evidence that Joseph Smith ever read VH or that any of his associates had a copy or knew of the work or saw any connection between it (or similar writings) and the Book of Mormon (although it has been recently rumored that a copy of VH exists with Oliver Cowdery's name in it and although substantial portions of VH are quoted in Josiah Priest's The Wonders of Nature and Providence Displayed, which was in the Manchester library in 1826). Roberts' claim that VH was around "five to seven years" before the Book of Mormon is a bit of an exaggeration, for the initial translation

of the Book of Mormon commenced in 1828 and was completed in July 1829. So the time span in which the connection must be made is shorter than Roberts allows for.

4) Nor is there evidence that any of Joseph and Ethan Smith's contemporaries saw any dependence. Gordon Thomasson has recently pointed out that, despite the immediate notoriety of Joseph Smith which caused such people as Charles Anthon to dissociate themselves publically from Joseph's movement, Ethan Smith made no such move. Yet it is just as likely (or more so) that Ethan Smith was aware of the Book of Mormon after its publication, as it is that Joseph was aware of VH. Furthermore, would 23 leading Protestant clergymen have endorsed Ethan Smith's book in 1833 in a widely distributed publication, Key to the Revelation of John (New York: J. & J. Harper) if they thought that it had been connected with, or exploited in any way by early Mormonism? Or would they have remained silent if they had seen a credible resemblance between the two books?

5) One can challenge fundamentally the comparative method. This is the approach taken by Hugh Nibley, "Just Another Book," "Grab Bag," and "The Comparative Method," Improvement Era (1959), F.A.R.M.S. Reprints N-MIX-2, 3 and 5. Of course, Roberts himself was aware that many of his "parallels" were extremely weak. On his suggestion that the name Ether in the Book of Mormon came from the name "Ethan Smith(!)" he himself cautions, "Do not take the idea too seriously" (p. 187). His claim is "What is sought in this study is not absolute identity of incidents, and absolute parallel of conditions and circumstances; but one thing here and another there, that may suggest another but similar thing in such a way as to make one a product of the other" (p. 187). This itself is an admission of very slippery methodology.

6) Another approach might be to list the hundreds of ways in which the Book of Mormon differs from VH. VH is merely a book presenting reports that support the idea that the Indians were descendants of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel. It contains no history, no narratives, no visions, no revelations, no personalities, no literature of these people themselves. Thus there are an enormous number of things which the Book of Mormon contains which VH does not. The reader can get a good idea of the meager contents of VH by reading the following summary of its main points. Anything beyond this is new material added by the Book of Mormon. Thus, even if VH is advanced as an explanation for some of the Book of Mormon, it does not explain very much.

7) A final test may be for people to read VH for themselves. It is a tedious volume, repetitious and redundant. A few of its main sources are quoted repeatedly and the author is argumentative and conclusory. To a modern reader, he seems very naive; even to his contemporary readers, Ethan Smith's points were not considered persuasive. As the Review discussed in the 1825 edition (p. 279) shows, the Reviewer found "nothing conclusive in all this." He was not impressed: "We have no evidence that the customs and institutions of the Hebrews . . . were peculiar to that people."

One should also notice that Roberts was not advancing an original thesis here. I. Woodbridge Riley, with whose work Roberts was familiar, and who wrote The Founder of Mormonism: A

Psychological Study of Joseph Smith Jr. (Yale Ph.D. Dissertation, 1902), was apparently the first to discuss the parallel between VH and the Book of Mormon. See Richard Bushman, Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), p. 191. Thus, in advancing the theory, Roberts knew that he was articulating the views of opponents of the Book of Mormon, not stating "conclusions" of his own, as he himself states in his unmailed letter to Heber J. Grant. See also Ariel Crowley, "Analysis of Ethan Smith's 'View of the Hebrews'--A Comparison with the Book of Mormon," in his About the Book of Mormon (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1961), pp. 110-133, with letter from Ben Roberts, July 22, 1939.

A. "An Unparallel"

The proposition before us regarding VH is this: Should we conclude that Joseph Smith specifically took the main structural aspects of the Book of Mormon story from VH? To find that he did, one must find that he knew VH well and respected it deeply. If so, he should have followed it--or at least not contradicted it--on its major points. But contradict it he does, over and over again. Since Roberts has pointed out some "parallels," consider, in this light, the following "unparallels."

(1) VH begins with a chapter (pp. 2-46) on the Destruction of Jerusalem. It has nothing to say, however, about the destruction in 586/7 B.C. by the Babylonians, but details at length the utter annihilation of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. The Jerusalem described by VH is that of the time of Christ, with a palace, towers on its three walls, a fort, etc. (p. 16). Had Joseph Smith followed this description, he might have unwittingly attributed these details to Jerusalem in Lehi's day. Moreover, David Whitmer remembers Joseph saying that he had not known that Jerusalem had walls until after he translated 1 Nephi, which refers to them. M. J. Hubble interview with David Whitmer, 13 Nov. 1886, in Stanley B. Kimball, "Missouri Mormon Manuscripts," BYU Studies 14 (1974), 486.

(2) Specific heavenly signs marked the destruction of Jerusalem: a meteor hung over the city in the sky for a year (p. 24); a heifer gave birth to a lamb (p. 25); chariots and armed men appeared in the air over Jerusalem (p. 25); a man walked the streets freely proclaiming woes for seven years (p. 26); famines, horrors, mass suicides, and prisoners starving to death are described (p. 34). Why does Joseph Smith overlook such singular and memorable details?

(3) Chapter 2 (pp. 47-66) describes "The Certain Restoration of Judah and Israel." One should note, at the outset, that the word "Restoration" means something entirely different to Joseph Smith than it does in VH, namely the Restoration of all things in a culminating dispensation.

(4) VH lists many prophecies about the Restoration of Israel, including Deut. 30; Isa. 11, 18, 60, 65; Jer. 16, 23, 30-

31, 35-37; Zeph. 3; Amos 9; Hos. and Joel. Ezekiel's valley of dry bones is related to the restoration of the Ten Tribes too. These passages are discussed in detail and with enthusiasm as important, undeniable proof that a restoration of the lost tribes will occur. This is an essential premise in the logic of VH, yet with the sole exception of Isa. 11, none of these scriptures appear in the Book of Mormon. Ezek. 37:16-20 may be related to 2 Ne. 3:12, but the latter only says that the writings of the loins of Judah and the loins of Joseph shall "grow together unto the confounding of false doctrines." Since the word "stick" only appears once in the Book of Mormon (1 Ne. 16:23), G. Smith overstates this matter when he claims that "both VH and the Book of Mormon identify the American Indians as the 'stick of Joseph or Ephraim,'" Sunstone 6 (May/June 1981), p. 46.

(5) VH describes in precise detail the boundaries of the Holy Land (from Egypt to Mesopotamia) which must some day be given back to the tribes of Israel forever in order for God's prophecies to be fulfilled (pp. 49-50). The Book of Mormon is vague about what lands of inheritance will be occupied by the gathered Israelites.

(6) Chapter 3 (pp. 67-225) comprises most of the book. It produces evidence that the American Indians are the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel. Numerous details are given which in Ethan Smith's opinion are "distinguished Hebraisms" and traits given to Israel of old "designed to distinguish them from all other nations" (p. 154). Most of these "distinguished" points that seemed so obvious to Ethan Smith are not to be found in the Book of Mormon, as one would expect to find them if Joseph Smith were using VH or trying to make his book persuasive. For example:

(7) VH expects two groups, the Jews and the American Indians, to be restored (p. 71). The Book of Mormon expects three groups--the Jews and the Nephites and the Ten Tribes--to be restored (2 Ne. 29:13). Wherever the Ten Tribes are, they are not the same as the American Indians for the Book of Mormon (3 Ne. 17:4). This is a fundamental repudiation of the sole thesis of VH.

(8) VH dwells on Hos. 4:16, which states that the Lord will feed the tribes "as a lamb in a large place." For VH, this is important proof that they are in a vast territory (p. 72). There is no Book of Mormon use of this prophecy.

(9) VH asserts repeatedly that the Ten Tribes came to America via "Beering's (sic) Strait," which they crossed on "dry land" (pp. 76-78; see also 114, 153, 159, 168, passim). According to VH, this opinion is unquestionable, supported by Jarvis, Sewall, Israel, Adair, and Boudinot (of the American Bible Society). "They certainly found their way hither and no doubt over Beering's straits from the north to the east of Asia." (p. 168). Yet the Book of Mormon squarely and blatantly conflicts with this "learned" and in those days authoritatively accepted account.

(10) According to VH, the Indians spread over the land from North to East and from North to South. This is evidenced by several Indian accounts and is referred to repeatedly in VH (see pp. 81-83, 146, 182). This is a critical point, since Amos 8:11-12 prophesies that they will go from the north to the east, while sizeable population migrations in the Book of Mormon always move from the South to the North.

(11) The Indians are Israelites because they use the word "Hallelujah" (p. 87 and several other times). Here is one of VH's favorite proofs, a dead give-away, that the Indians are Israelites. Yet the word is never used in the Book of Mormon.

(12) The Indians are Israelites because they sacrifice and fast in preparation for war and purify themselves for battle. They also ~~asbtain from all~~ "matrimonial intercourse three days before going to war . . . and for three days after they return" (p. 123). Such abstraction never occurs in the Book of Mormon. Rather, the Book of Mormon people fast after their battles as a part of mourning for their dead--an accurate pre-Exilic feature. See Stephen Ricks, "Fasting in the Old Testament and in the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report RIC-83.

(13) The Indians are Israelites because Indian words resemble Hebrew. A table showing 34 Indian words or parts of sentences with Hebrew equivalents appears on pp. 90-91. No reader of the book could have missed this chart. VH also states that the Indian word for "spirit" is manito (p. 146). If Joseph Smith had wanted to make up names to use in the Book of Mormon that would substantiate his claim that these were authentic Western Hemisphere Hebrew words, he would have jumped at such a ready-made list! Yet none--not one--of these 34 Hebrew/Indian words has even the most remote resemblance to any of the 175 names that appear for the first time in the Book of Mormon. Had Joseph Smith put the slightest credence in VH, the names he would have fabricated for his own book would undoubtedly have resembled these VH words: e.g., Keah, Lani, Uwoh, Phale, Kurbet, etc.

(14) The Indians are Israelites because they know the flood story and call high mountains "ararat" (pp. 91, 115, 170 etc.) Since VH mentions this factor several times, it was significant evidence to Ethan Smith. But the flood story is never told in the Book of Mormon (Noah is mentioned once). In addition, VH claims that the Indians knew of a creation of woman from the ribs of two men (p. 143), yet ribs are never mentioned in the Book of Mormon.

(15) The Indians are Israelites because they have religious dances before going to war (pp. 92, 165). Beside the fact that the Book of Mormon never mentions dancing (except for the dancing maidens in Mosiah 20:5--which appears to be a celebration of the pre-Exilic festival of the 15th of Av; see F.A.R.M.S. Update February 1985), it is unclear in Biblical sources that the Israelites danced in preparation for war.

(16) The Indians are Israelites because they call God "Jah," and this is "exclusively Hebrew" (p. 92). They chanted "hal, hal, hal; le, le, le; lu, lu, lu; yah, yah, yah" (Studies, p. 237). Why then wouldn't Joseph Smith call God "Jah" at least once in the Book of Mormon? or use the word halleluyah? Jehovah appears only in 2 Ne 22:2 and Moro. 10:34.

(17) VH gives Abbamocko, an Indian name, as an example of a Hebrew name, "Abba" meaning "father" in Hebrew (p. 94). But if Joseph Smith had taken his cues from this shoddy kind of analysis, he would have blundered. The Hebrew "Abba-" does not appear as a prefix in the Israelite onomasticon. When "father" is used as a prefix in a Hebrew name, its form is simply "Ab-", as in Ab-raham. Book of Mormon names reflect this usage correctly, as in the names Abinadi and Abinadom.

(18) The Indians worshipped the sun (p. 95) and "saluted the dawn every morning," (p. 157) showing them to be pious and religious like the Israelites. Such a thing is never condoned in the Book of Mormon, undoubtedly because it was one of the very heresies which Lehi must have been fighting against, as Ezek. 8:15-16 makes clear: "Thou shalt see greater abominations than these . . . they worship the sun toward the east."

(19) The Indians are Israelites because they carry small boxes with them into battle. These are to protect them against injury. They are sure signs that the Indians' ancestors knew of the ark of the covenant! (pp. 95-96, 141, 162). How could Joseph Smith pass up such a distinguished and oft-attested Hebraism as this?! Yet in all the Book of Mormon battle scenes, there is not one hint of any such ark, box or bag serving as a military fetish or ceremonial artifact.

(20) The Indians are Israelites because they circumcise their boys (pp. 97, 170). One Indian could remember being held down while his father performed this rite on him. If Joseph Smith had understood that this Israelite practice persisted down to his day on the Western Hemisphere, why would he have "terminated" the practice in Mor. 8:8 ("the law of circumcision is done away") among the Nephites? He leaves no hint that the wicked Lamanites would carry on such a practice.

(21) The Indians are Israelites because they believe the air to be filled with spirits, good and bad (pp. 99, 156), just as the Hebrews believed in good and bad angels. This is absolutely not the angelology of the Book of Mormon. Rather the Book of Mormon has little angelology; it refers to the "angel of the Lord" but not much else. The good and bad angels with which VH is familiar, however, enter Hebrew theology only after the Exile in Babylonia, after VH's Ten Tribes and the Book of Mormon's Lehi had both left Palestine. Not only does the Book of Mormon not agree with VH here, but VH itself is off the mark.

(22) The Indians are Israelites because they are "intoxicated with religious pride" and call all other people

"accursed," yet consider themselves God's peculiar people (p. 96). Beside being inconsistent with extensive evidence that VH later adduces to prove that the Indians are Israelites because they are hospitable and kind (pp. 174-77), this is hardly the attitude the Book of Mormon attributes to its Lamanite survivors.

(23) The Indians are Israelites because they called God "Providence" (p. 57), the "Great Chief Father" (p. 100), the "Great Man above" (p. 107), "Thunderer" (p. 159), the "Supreme Essence" and the "fountain of mystic medicine" (p. 159). The Book of Mormon never calls God any of these distinctive names, though Lamanite Lamoni comes close.

(24) While VH reports in some places that the Indians are Israelites because they have "the notion of there being but one great and true God" (pp. 102), it also reports Indians who believe that god is in the buffalo, the wolf, the bear, a bird or a rattlesnake (p. 102), and Indians who believe in 37 gods (p. 106). Does any of this have any bearing whatsoever on the theology in the Book of Mormon?

(25) The Indians are Israelites because they believed that the gods controlled man's destinies (p. 106). This looks more like VH is reading a little Calvinism into Indian lore. The Book of Mormon knows nothing of this idea of destinies.

(26) The Indians are Israelites because of "their dress and trinkets, as notable, like those of ancient Israel; their earrings, nose jewels, bracelets on their arms and legs, rings," etc. (p. 108). Little mention of jewelry is found in the Book of Mormon (the Zoramites had ringlets, bracelets and ornaments of gold, Alma 31:28), yet VH would have led Joseph Smith to believe that this was an important Israelite characteristic. More important to the Book of Mormon was "costly apparel," which is mentioned frequently.

(27) The Indians are Israelites because the Mohawk tribe was a tribe held in great reverence by all the others, to whom tribute was paid (p. 109). Obviously(!) the Mohawks are the vestiges of the tribe of Levi, Israel's tribe of priests. If Joseph Smith believed that such a tribe or priestly remnant had survived down to his day, he forgot to provide for anything to that effect in the Book of Mormon.

(28) The Indians are Israelites because their tribes had "animal emblems" (p. 111). In just the same way, Dan was symbolized by the serpent, Benjamin by the wolf. The Book of Mormon makes no such references, in fact Gen. 49 (where Jacob blesses his sons and mentions these animals) only associates animals with some of the tribes, contrary to VH.

(29) The Indians are Israelites because they had cities of refuge (p. 112). Blood was never shed in these towns, and Indian captives were allowed to flee to these cities of refuge (p. 167). Indeed, ancient Israelite law provided for cities of refuge (Ex.

21:13; Num. 35; Deut 19), but the Book of Mormon never mentions them. Surely the many killings in the Book of Mormon (i.e., Nehor slaying Gideon) present golden opportunities for a writer following VH to incorporate references about a place of refuge. The answer may be found in the idea that the cities of refuge were unique to the Holy Land of Palestine, which was especially to be kept pure from blood guilt (I am unaware of any cities of refuge outside Palestine in the Diaspora). The Mosaic law established the six cities of refuge precisely in certain Israelite locations. It might have been considered inappropriate to supplant those cities with New World locations. Posts of refuge, of course, are not mentioned in the Book of Mormon either.

(30) The Indians are Israelites because they selected wise young men to carefully retain their traditions (p. 113). Had Joseph Smith been a devotee of VH, such selections would have been depicted in the Book of Mormon, but instead, all the transmitters of the Nephite records from Jacob to Amaleki, Mosiah I to Mosiah II, and Alma the Younger to Ammaron (4 Ne. 49), were fathers and sons. The process was essentially patriarchal and genealogical.

(31) The Indians are Israelites because they had traditions about ancient ancestors who lived "till their feet were worn out" (p. 115). Yet the patriarchs of Genesis are not described this way in the Book of Mormon. Rather, the "age of man" in 3 Ne. 28:2 is typically ancient. See John Welch, "Longevity in the Book of Mormon," Collegium Aesculapium (1984), F.A.R.M.S. Reprint WEL-84.

(32) The Indians are Israelites because they have a tradition about an ancestor with 12 sons (p. 116). This is never mentioned in the Book of Mormon, although it would have been easy to make reference to the 12 tribes or the 12 sons of Jacob.

(33) The Indians are Israelites because they have a tradition about a rod with buds (p. 116), obviously parallel to Aaron's rod. The only similar Book of Mormon reference to a rod is to one made of iron.

(34) Had the writer of the Book of Mormon relied on VH for his ideas about Jewish festivals, he would have thought of Pentecost in the following terms: "Dr. Beatty informs us of their feast, called the hunter's feast; answering, he thinks, to the Pentecost in ancient Israel. He describes it as follows: They choose twelve men, who provide twelve deer. Each of the twelve men cuts a sapling with these they form a tent, covered with blankets. They choose twelve stones for an altar." Yet these practices have nothing to do with the ancient Israelite Pentecost. In contrast, the account of Abinadi in Mosiah 11-17 depicts an ancient Israelite Pentecost with stunning precision in its liturgical language and symbolism. See "Abinadi and Pentecost," F.A.R.M.S. Update September 1985. How did reliance on VH produce this?

(35) VH often refers to an Indian feast "in which no bone of their sacrifice may be broken," alluding to a central characteristic of Passover (p. 117). However, this idea, whether connected with Passover or with Jesus, is absent from the Book of Mormon. Likewise, the idea of drinking bitter liquids (pp. 120, 143) that is associated with Passover in VH is absent from the Book of Mormon. Instead, there is considerable evidence of subtle and intimate Passover practices in two places in the Book of Mormon; the Book of Mormon practices seem to have been unknown to Gentiles in the 1820s. See "The Sons of the Passover," F.A.R.M.S. Update September 1984.

(36) VH concludes that the Indians are Israelites because they sacrifice their "first fruits" to God (p. 118, 145). Yet outside of one place that mentions "firstlings" (Mos. 2:3), the idea of "first fruits" being sacrificed by the people in a harvest celebration is absent from the Book of Mormon. Only Jesus (2 Ne. 2:9, Jac. 4:11) and the fruits of repentance (Moro. 8:25) are called "first fruits." Moreover, a typical Indian feast, as described on pp. 142-43, has no bearing on any festival observed in the Book of Mormon.

(37) VH claims that the Indians "were never known to offer sacrifice to any god made with hands" (p. 105). But in the Book of Mormon, Mor. 4:14, the Lamanites were guilty of this very sin.

(38) The Indians are Israelites because they had a daily sacrifice of fat in the fire and passed their venison through the flame, cutting it into twelve pieces (p. 119). This great clue of "Israelitishness" is also absent from the Book of Mormon.

(39) The Indians are Israelites because their priests wore buttons, shells, antlers, feathers, bells, moccasins and rattles made of dried turkey spurs (p. 121) or porcupine quills (p. 166), which clothing VH connects with the High Priest's vestments described in the Hebrew Bible. Besides doubting the relevance of such attire either to ancient Israelite priestly robes or to Joseph Smith, one must also note that the Book of Mormon never describes the clothing worn by any Nephite priest. Similarly, the word "breastplate" appears in VH, but that does little in this context to establish a relationship with the Old Testament or the Book of Mormon.

(40) The Indians are Israelites because they considered their land to be one "flowing with milk and honey" (p. 121). In all the Book of Mormon descriptions of the Nephites' Promised Land, however, this singular phrase is never employed.

(41) The Indians are Israelites because their temples had "a holy of holies" (p. 124). The Book of Mormon is silent on this significant detail.

(42) The Indians are Israelites because they had dietary rules. For example, they would "never eat the hollow of the thigh of anything they kill," had manners for the use of knives,

and would not break the bones of animals they ate. The Book of Mormon makes, however, no reference whatever to such eating practices, let alone Jewish dietary laws, perhaps because such rules took on primary significance in Jewish theology only after Lehi had left.

(43) The Indians are Israelites because they, like the Hebrews, mourned for the dead (p. 124). Of course, the Book of Mormon peoples (and all peoples) also mourn their dead; but VH tells how the Indians hired professional mourners. There is none of this in the Book of Mormon.

(44) VH says that the Indians, like the Hebrews, buried furniture with their dead (p. 125), a concept not present in the Book of Mormon.

(45) VH says that the Indians knew "a distinguished Hebraism," namely "laying the hand on the mouth, and the mouth in the dust." No reference to this sure sign of Hebraism is employed in the Book of Mormon.

(46) The Indians are Israelites because they practiced levirate marriage (p. 125). Whether this is true or not, it is not mentioned in the Book of Mormon.

(47) VH claims that the Indians are Israelites because their women separated themselves during, and purified themselves after, their menstrual periods (p. 126, 143). No such rules are alluded to in the Book of Mormon.

(48) Did the Book of Mormon get the idea that monogamous marriage was a good idea because VH reports an Indian view that "tak[ing] a number of wives at a time and turn[ing] them away at pleasure" was a wicked thing? This seems unlikely. The Book of Mormon leaves the possibility of polygamy open, as was the case in ancient Israel, unlike VH. The Book of Mormon never reports cases where men had turned their wives out at pleasure; it speaks much rather of harlots and concubines.

(49) The Indians are Israelites because they keep an eternal fire burning in their temples (p. 134) and because they burn lamps all night before a new moon (p. 164). No such details appear in the Book of Mormon.

(50) The Indians are Israelites because they worship a God who controls nature and specifically "caused the sun to shine and dispersed the dark cloud" (p. 135). This characteristic of God is never mentioned in the Book of Mormon.

(51) Like the Hebrews who used incense, the Indians use a sweathouse and burn tobacco as a part of their prayers (p. 136). It would have been easy for Joseph Smith to build such practices into, for example, the perverted rites of the Zoramites, but he did not.

(52) The Indians are Israelites because they prayed to God that they might be "carried home in safety to our wives and children" as they departed on their long journeys (p. 138). The prayer of Alma in Alma 31:26-35 is ideally suited to lodge such an expression, but neither it nor anything like it appears.

(53) The Indians are Israelites because, in a manner which is "manifestly Hebrew," they were very suspicious of evil and started all their council meetings by smoking a peace pipe and choosing a speaker to express their views (p. 144). This is not the way such negotiations are conducted in the Book of Mormon. See Mosiah 9:6-7, where such a meeting is reported--one that follows Near Eastern tribal practices.

(54) VH considers it significant that the Indians "count time after the manner of the Hebrews. They divide the year into spring, summer, autumn, and winter. They number their year from any of those four periods, for they have no name for a year, and they subdivide these, and count the year by lunar months, like the Israelites, who counted by moons." (p. 149). Had Joseph Smith followed this, he would have blundered into error. Instead the Book of Mormon counts the years according to regnal years, and numbers the months in the manner of pre-Exilic Israel. See Jay Huber, "Lehi's 600 Year Prophecy and the Birth of Christ," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report HUB-82. Moreover, VH takes it as a sign of Indian erudition that they intercalated their calendar every 104 years (p. 178). Such a practice is absent from the Book of Mormon.

(55) VH claims that Indians knew the Hebrew tetragrammaton or great four letter name, YHWH (p. 151). The Book of Mormon never draws attention to this name of God.

(56) The Indians are Israelites because they worked to earn their wives, as did Jacob (p. 155). This, however, is not the way Nephi and his brothers take their wives.

(57) The Indians are Israelites because they could easily divorce their wives, as under the Law of Moses (p. 155). The Book of Mormon, however, opposes divorce and encourages marital fidelity.

(58) VH refers to the Indians' practice of interpreting dreams and searching into futurity while their priests were in the process of curing diseases or healing wounds (p. 155). Specific disease is mentioned only once in the Book of Mormon (fevers in Alma 46:40); medicine is never associated with prophecy or spirituality.

(59) VH associates medicine and cleansing the heart with treaty making (p. 157). Treaty oaths in the Book of Mormon, however, follow with great precision the Near Eastern practices of the Eighth Century B.C. See Mark Davis and Brent Israelsen, "International Relations and Treaties in the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report D&I-82; Stephen Ricks, "The

Treaty/Covenant Pattern in King Benjamin's Address," BYU Studies 1983, F.A.R.M.S. Reprint RIC-83b.

(60) The Indians are Israelites because they ritually gather three bunches of grass, have sacred paintings, and ten dreamers (pp. 157-58). The paintings are "anointings and purifications;" and anytime VH finds a number three it is associated with the Trinity; anytime it finds the number 10 it is associated with the Ten Tribes. Beside being naive beyond description, these notions are irrelevant to the Book of Mormon, which never expressly numbers anything 10 except Mormon's age.

(61) The Indians are Israelites because they have their young boys fast on a hill, roll in white clay, while humming (p. 161). This, VH claims, is the legacy of the Israelite "dust and ashes." Had Joseph Smith believed this, why is the Book of Mormon silent on these aspects of "dust," "sackcloth," or "ashes"?

(62) The Indians are Israelites because they had sacred places (rocks, trees, fountains, etc.) where their assemblies were held (p. 165). Although the Book of Mormon speaks of many formal assemblies, they are always at a temple, synagogue or church; the "waters of Mormon" is only an impromptu assembly place.

(63) The Indians are Israelites because they allowed blood vengeance to be obtained only by relatives of the deceased (p. 166). A close examination of blood vengeance in the Book of Mormon, however, indicates its direct relationship with Old Testament ideas and not any relationship with VH. See James Rasmussen, "Blood Vengeance in the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report RAS-81. Indeed, the Indian practice would seem to be inconsistent with the account found in Alma 1 regarding Nehor's killing of Gideon.

(64) The Indians are Israelites because they knew the mechanical arts of brickmaking, pottery, sculptures, implements of iron (p. 172), paintings, stone buildings, and carving in wood and stone (p. 182, 186). Brickmaking was learned during the Israelites' bondage in Egypt--a period of captivity often mentioned in the Book of Mormon--but brickmaking is never suggested. Nor is pottery, sculpting, painting, carving in wood, etc. Indeed, the Israelites avoided "graven images," although Lamanites and backsliders had "idols."

(65) The destruction of the more technically minded Israelites was God's way of putting the Israelites in "an outcast state" to fulfill specific prophecy (p. 172). This prophecy is never alluded to in the Book of Mormon.

(66) According to VH, the Indians quickly lost knowledge that they were all from the same family (p. 173). The Book of Mormon tells that family and tribal affiliations were maintained for almost 1000 years. See, e.g., 3 Ne. 7:2; 4 Ne. 1:36-39.

(67) According to VH, even the best of the Israelites were only "partially civilized" (p. 173). The Nephites of the Book of Mormon were fully civilized.

(68) The Indians are Israelites because they knew how to build dikes, canals and immense pyramids (p. 179). No dikes, canals or pyramids are specifically mentioned in the Book of Mormon.

(69) When VH says that the Indians' government was theocratic, it means something different from what the Book of Mormon means. For VH, government was begun by an "ancient mysterious founder" (read "Moses") and therefore is theocratic. This government was a "despotism concealed under the appearances of a gentle and patriarchal government" (p. 180). Contrast this facile generality with Benjamin's accurate description of the role of the King in Israel (Mos. 2) and his profound paraphrase of the Paragraph of the King from Deut. 17. See John Tvedtnes, "A Nephite Feast of Tabernacles," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report TVE-78.

(70) The Indians are Israelites because the Indians and the rabbis called their deputy priests "sagan" (p. 181). The Book of Mormon not only never makes mention of such a name, it makes no reference to deputy priests.

(71) VH claims that Indians had a "constitution" (pp. 181-82). No such document is ever mentioned in the Book of Mormon, despite this open invitation. The Nephite "republic" was still a far cry from a modern republic. See John Welch, "Old World Perspectives on the Book of Mormon," Ensign, F.A.R.M.S. Reprint WEL-76.

(72) VH is adamant that the first settlers who moved from the north down into the south (Mexico) migrated there in 648 A.D. "All seem to agree," VH claims (p. 183). In the face of such widespread and absolute assertions, what devotee of this volume would dare to place inhabitants in the land southward hundreds and thousands of years before this time?!

(73) VH reports that early Christian missionaries were convinced that the "gospel had in very remote time, been already preached in America." (p. 187). They drew this conclusion, however, only from their "rites of religion," "ritual," and "mythology." (p. 187). Never is the claim made that they knew of Christ.

(74) VH claims that the righteous Indians were active "for a long time," well into recent times, and that their destruction occurred about 1400 A.D., as evidenced by tree rings near some of the mounds and fortifications (p. 188). The Book of Mormon implicitly rejects this notion by reporting the destruction of the Nephites in the fourth century A.D.

(75) VH describes a vast civilization all over the Mississippi valley and Eastern United States, with military works, walls, ditches, forts, cemeteries, temples, altars, camps, over 5,000 towns or villages, race grounds, places of amusement, habitations of chieftains, videttes, watchtowers, monuments and high places all over the place (p. 189). When seen as a whole picture, these many items provide only a very weak parallel for the isolated watchtower, discussed by Roberts, which the Nephites built in the land of Nephi.

(76) The Indians are Israelites because they know how to use circles, squares, octagons, and parallel lines (p. 190). No evidence of geometry is found in the Book of Mormon.

(77) The Indians are Israelites because they had wells, like Jacob's well, with stones at their mouth (p. 190). No wells are mentioned in the Book of Mormon.

(78) The Indians are Israelites because in their tombs people have found mirrors, stone axes, breastplates, crucibles, and scabbards (pp. 192-97). Most of these items are never mentioned, and none of them in connection with a burial in the Book of Mormon.

(79) The Indians are Israelites because they knew the legends of Quetzalcoatl (pp. 204-08). But the surprise for the modern reader here is that VH proves beyond doubt that Quetzalcoatl was none other than--not Jesus--but Moses! "Who could this be but Moses, the ancient legislator in Israel?" (p. 206, emphasis in original). He was white, gave laws, required penance (strict obedience), had a serpent with green plumage (brazen serpent in the wilderness), pierced ears (like certain slaves under the Law of Moses), appeased God's wrath (by sacrifices), was associated with a great famine (in Egypt), spoke from a volcano (Sinai), walked barefoot (removed his shoes), spawned a golden age (seven years of plenty in Egypt--which has nothing to do with Moses, by the way), etc. If VH provided the inspiration for the Book of Mormon, it did not provide much. Besides the fact that VH's explanation of Quetzalcoatl as Moses is inconsistent with the Book of Mormon, none of the hallmark-details associated with Quetzalcoatl according to VH (walking barefoot, speaking from a mountain, having feathers, etc.) are incorporated into the account of Christ in 3 Nephi.

(80) The Indians are Israelites because a Jewish phylactery was found wrapped in rawhide near Pittsburgh (pp. 217-25). Yet these prayers of the Jews are not mentioned, paraphrased or otherwise included in the Book of Mormon. Furthermore, it is doubtful that the Israelites in the Northern Kingdom would have worn phylacteries before the time of their destruction by the Assyrians in 722 B.C., as VH baldly states that they did (p. 224).

(81) The final chapter (pp. 227-52) in VH is entitled "An Address of the Prophet Isaiah Relative to the Restoration of His

People." After repeating most of the restoration prophecies discussed above, VH then offers a detailed exegesis of Isaiah 18 to prove that Isaiah saw the ten tribes on the Western Hemisphere. This chapter becomes the strongest prophecy in the VH arsenal. Although the Book of Mormon also draws heavily upon Isaiah, it is bewildering for any comparison that not so much as a whisper of this chapter is found in the Book of Mormon. For a detailed study of the fact that there is very little overlap between the Isaiah materials in VH and the Book of Mormon, see S. Palmer and W. Knecht, "View of the Hebrews: Substitute for Inspiration?" BYU Studies (1964), F.A.R.M.S. Reprint P&K-64. See also John Tvedtnes, "The Isaiah Variants in the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report TVE-81, for a thorough comparison of the Isaiah texts in the Book of Mormon in light of the textual variants in the Masoretic, Dead Sea and Septuagint texts.

(82) ~~The Indians~~ are Israelites because they, like the Jews, had harps (p. 184). As a matter of fact American Indian ethnology provides no evidence of such instrument in pre-Columbian times. No harp is mentioned in the Book of Mormon.

(83) VH mentions hieroglyphics. The Book of Mormon, on the other hand, speaks only of "reformed Egyptian," which appears to have good reference to hieratic or demotic. See "Martin Harris' Visit to Charles Anthon: Collected Documents on Short-hand Egyptian," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report STF-85a.

(84) Unlike the Book of Mormon, VH mentions many distinctive biblical ideas and words, like "Gog" (p. 54), "Euphrates" (p. 89), or "Beelzebub" (p. 99). While the Book of Mormon uses several biblical names, they are different from those appearing in VH and reveal many interesting details about the language and mentality of the Nephites when studied collectively and closely.

Further differences between the Book of Mormon and VH are discussed by other authors. See, Spencer Palmer & William Knecht, "View of the Hebrews: Substitute for Inspiration?" BYU Studies, 5 (1964), 105-113; Hugh Nibley, "The Comparative Method," Improvement Era, 62 (Oct-Nov 1959); Hugh Nibley, No Ma'am That's Not History (Bookcraft, 1946); Bruce Blumell, "I Have A Question," Ensign (September, 1976), each available as reprints from F.A.R.M.S. See also Ariel Crowley, "Analysis of Ethan Smith's 'View of the Hebrews': A Comparison with the Book of Mormon," in About the Book of Mormon (Deseret, 1961); William Riley, "A Comparison of Passages from Isaiah and Other Old Testament Prophets in Ethan Smith's View of the Hebrews and the Book of Mormon" (M.A. Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1971); Madison U. Sowell, "An Overview of the Arguments for and against View of the Hebrews as a Possible Source for the Book of Mormon," Sunstone 6 (May/June, 1981), 44, 50-54; Richard Bushman, Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism, pp. 134-39.

In sum, let us then review what it is that Roberts is asking us to consider. It is this: that Joseph Smith knew VH and drew upon certain sections of it (which are scattered throughout the

book) for the basic structural ideas of the Book of Mormon. Anyone adhering to this view would have to believe that Joseph Smith knew all of the foregoing "powerful" and "distinctive" Hebrew traits demonstrably shown to exist among the Indians, but that he somehow did not choose to use any of them. Instead, he consciously chose to prove the Hebrew origins of his the Book of Mormon peoples by saying that they had knowledge of such (obviously!) distinguishing characteristics as "knowledge of one god," "iron," "shipping," and "writing" (these will be discussed below). Does Roberts really think that Joseph Smith was so foolish as that?

B. "A Parallel?"

According to the editors of Studies (but without any elaboration or documentation), Roberts seized "opportunities presented by his mission presidency" (p. 149) and incorporated the "latest scientific investigations" from 1922-27, to construct his "Parallel." In fact, nothing new is added to the Parallel (pp. 321-44) beyond what is contained in the 1922 paper (pp. 149-319). Consider his points, which he summarizes (pp. 240-42), in a manner similar to the Conclusion of VH itself (VH pp. 267). According to Roberts, one might argue that VH is "parallel" to the Book of Mormon because of these points:

(a) VH suggests an Israelitish origin of the American Indians. No one will doubt that this was a common belief in the 1820s, as it had been for centuries before. This in no way indicates a specific dependency of the Book of Mormon on VH. Furthermore, the Book of Mormon has its people coming from the destruction of Jerusalem 587 B.C., not from the Ten Tribes who left Israel in 722 B.C. Roberts is, of course, aware of this difference, but discounts it as being of "slight importance" (p. 160). On the contrary, many historical points turn out to relate critically and accurately in the Book of Mormon to dating Lehi in the end of the seventh century B.C. See Hugh Nibley, Lehi in the Desert, and Approach; John Welch, "Old World Perspectives on the Book of Mormon," Ensign, F.A.R.M.S. Reprint WEL-76; Robert F. Smith, "Book of Mormon Event Structure: Ancient Near East," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report SMI-84. The difference is, in fact, of great importance.

Furthermore, of all the "distinctive Hebraisms" VH offers, many of them are completely ignored or are contradicted by the Book of Mormon, as discussed above. Those that are there are not prominent or distinctive or uniquely Israelite (and a number are simply in error), namely a tribal society, prophets, punishing wrongdoers, and burying the dead. For example, if the Indians are Israelites because they had an annual expiation of sin (VH, p. 119), this practice is certainly not explicitly described in any Book of Mormon sermon or celebration account; only subtle references are found. And again, although the Hebrews, the Nephites, and the Indians (p. 124) all speak of death as a kind of "sleep," there is a closer connection here between certain Nephite phrases and Egyptian funerary texts. See Robert F. Smith, "Shakespeare and the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S.

Preliminary Report SMI-80a. Roberts' other "Israelitish features" are all discussed above.

(b) Both deal with the destruction of Jerusalem. See (1) above.

(c) Both deal with the gathering of Israel and restoration of the Ten Tribes. But the Book of Mormon does not use the same scriptures as VH; see (4) above.

(d) Both use Isaiah. But see (81) above.

(e) Both appeal to the Gentiles to help the Jews. But VH itself documents the fact that this movement was widespread. It was not set in motion by VH.

(f) Both speak of migrations into a country where "never man dwelt" (VH, p. 75) or "never had man been" (Eth. 2:5). But these expressions are not that similar; each book speaks of different migrations. The VH has the group travel between the Black and Caspian Seas (places not mentioned in the Book of Mormon), while Ether has them travel in boats over the water. Roberts claims that "both peoples enter a valley at the commencement of their journey" (p. 186), but VH never speaks of a valley--Roberts is fudging here; VH has the tribes leave through the "upper regions" of Mesopotamia, not the river valley. Moreover, we need not assume that Joseph Smith, in order to know of such phrases or accounts, had ever seen VH, since 2 Esdras 13:40-49 (which was right in the Old Testament Apocrypha known to all KJV family Bibles of Joseph Smith's day) tells the whole story: the Ten Tribes, wandering into another land, taking counsel among themselves, going forth "where never mankind dwelt," entering into Mesopotamia, etc. This point is important, for this detail is the only place that Roberts can point to in VH to suggest literal copying by the Book of Mormon. Yet the phrase is not so unusual, and the notion need not have come even from VH at all.

(g) Both speak of a long journey for religious motives, and both encounter seas. Of course the journey is long, but the peoples encounter seas in much different ways.

(h) Both divide their people into two groups, one good and the other bad. The picture here, however, is not so clear. In the Book of Mormon, the groups change, each becoming righteous and wicked, having their ups and downs, over a long period of time. The Book of Mormon is far from a "good guys against the bad guys" story, as Nibley discusses in detail in Since Cumorah (Deseret, 1967), pp. 378-90. In VH, the picture is also mixed: sometimes the wicked group is described as ferocious and evil, but in other places VH spends several pages proving that the Indians are really smiling, hospitable, peaceable, moral, and gentle (e.g. VH pp. 174-78). VH is self-contradictory on this point.

(i) There are long wars in both. Roberts incorrectly sees the Book of Mormon as the most war-ridden history of all time (p. 168). War, of course, is a universal phenomenon, but one which receives very little attention in VH.

(j) The bad overpower the good. This, of course, has to be part of the explanation, otherwise the highly civilized people should still have been there when the Europeans arrived. But in fact, in the Book of Mormon, both the Nephites and Lamanites had become hopelessly wicked by the time of the Nephite destruction.

(k) Both speak of the civilized people knowing mechanical arts, written language, navigation, iron and other metals. Here it is important to note that Roberts asserts that these points are "just intruded into the narrative, and do not seem to rise from it." (p. 198). He claims that for example, because shipping, is mentioned only twice in the Book of Mormon, it was not a real part of an actual history--for had the Nephites really known about shipping they would have used it on other occasions (e.g., to escape from the Lamanites). Thus the claim is that Joseph Smith just stuck these points in to conform with what he had learned about the knowledge of the Indians from his reading of VH. As mentioned above, if Joseph Smith had wanted to prove the Israelitish or civilized origins of American Indians, he surely could have picked more significant points to throw in. Beside that, the encounter of the Nephites with shipping at the end of Alma and the beginning of Helaman fits logically into their history: before this time, they had lived in the interior Lands of Nephi and Zarahemla; only around 70 B.C. had they begun to colonize and control regions by the sea. They were not very successful in these regions.

(l) Both supposedly assume no other inhabitants in the Western Hemisphere. See Part I above.

(m) VH assumes that the whole of the American continents was occupied. But it does not see settlements moving south until after the Book of Mormon times.

(n) Both assume that the Indian languages came from Hebrew. This is a corollary of (a). Both are aware that languages change over time.

(o) VH describes an Indian breastplate, buttons and other items of clothing. See (39) above.

(p) VH mentions idolatry and human sacrifice. For idolatry, see (85) above. It was commonly known that the Aztecs had practiced human sacrifice.

(q) Both praise generosity and denounce pride. These are commonplace and biblical, if not universal, religious teachings.

(r) VH tells of a "lost book" once possessed by the Indians (i.e. the Law of Moses). While some Indians reportedly

remembered a time when their ancestors had a book that gave them happiness (VH, p. 130), the book they had was "away in another country" (p. 130) and refers to the Law of Moses, which the Israelites left behind. The book was taken away before God "took pity on them and directed them to this country" (p. 115). The Book of Mormon presents a much different picture, with the Plates of Laban being brought to this hemisphere. Later in VH a second "book" is mentioned. After presenting evidences of Hebrew writing supposedly found in several Indian mounds, VH reports of an Indian who claimed that his tribe "had for a long time preserved" a book which they had "not long since" buried with an Indian chief (p. 223). The report gives no indication of the nature or contents of this second book. G. Smith conflates these two accounts and misrepresents the matter when he says that VH and the Book of Mormon both tell the same story about sacred records which were "handed down from generation to generation," Sunstone 6 (May/June, 1981), p. 46.

(s) The book was buried with a high priest. Of course, the Book of Mormon plates were not buried in a grave with Moroni. Indeed, a much closer parallel turns out to be the burial of sacred records at Qumran, at Nag Hammadi, and elsewhere in the ancient Near East. See, e.g., Curtis Wright, "Ancient Burials of Metal Documents in Stone Boxes," Journal of Library History (1981), F.A.R.M.S. Reprint WRI-81.

(t) Both talk about watchtowers. See (75) above.

(u) Both mention high places and towers as places of worship. But VH never calls the places of worship "towers," and the Hebrew Bible often speaks of "high places."

(v) Both speak of changing from a monarchy to a republic. See (69, 71) above and (w) below.

(w) Both have civil and religious power united in the same person. Besides the fact that this is not a very accurate description of the Book of Mormon (in which the line of kings is distinct from the religious record keepers from Nephi to Amaleki, and in which civil and religious powers are separated during almost all of the reign of the judges), the idea of a king with religious power is present in the model of the Davidic monarchy.

(x) VH speaks of "the union of the civil and ecclesiastical power in the same persons of the princes--the struggle between Quaulz and Matlax, the good and bad principle by which the world is governed" (p. 185). Somehow this is supposedly the source of Lehi's teaching about "opposition in all things." Evidence that Roberts himself did not take this (and perhaps many) of these arguments seriously is found in his article in the Deseret News, November 15, 1930, in which he says "emphatically no" to the idea that Joseph Smith got this idea from his New York informational environment. Furthermore, the idea of opposition has deep roots in pre-Socratic philosophy and ancient Near Eastern thought.

(y) Both say that the gospel was preached anciently in America. But see (73) above.

(z) VH details the story of Quetzalcoatl, "who in so many things is reminiscent of the Christ." But see (79) above, where it is clear that Quetzalcoatl is not an image of Christ for VH, but of Moses.

Other similarities might have been included in Roberts' summary of his lengthy discussion, but he has covered his main points. For example, he mentions that VH calls upon the people of the United States to convert the Indians (Studies, pp. 176-7) and to remember our debt to the sons of Jacob. So does the Book of Mormon. Also, VH states that "it is generally thought that the days of miracles are past" (p. 217) and that "we are to expect no new revelation from heaven," for the evidence we have is clear enough (pp. 168-9). Similarly, Mormon 8:26 prophesies that the Book of Mormon will appear "in a day when it shall be said that miracles are done away." However, according to VH itself, this general belief was widespread, thus not requiring any specific connection between VH and the Book of Mormon.

Roberts proposes VH as the source for Laman and Lemuel's question in 1 Ne. 22:1-2, whether the prophecies of Israel's restoration should be understood literally or spiritually (p. 210). This, however, has been an obvious and a common question facing those interpreting these prophecies back to the very beginning. Further research now underway will show the extent to which the prophets of the Exile themselves--Laman and Lemuel's contemporaries--asked this question as they pondered the specific judgments that had not been literally fulfilled. Were they not also faced with a crisis of faith, requiring them to think about reinterpreting their own literature with this very question in mind? Was this not the cause of Ezekiel and others turning to "eschatological" and "symbolic" modes of prophesying, to shift the domain of their prophetic tradition from the literal to the spiritual?

VH reports that rusted swords have been found in North American Indian burial grounds (p. 195), although modern archaeology finds no such weapons. This is a common enough notion as to have little bearing on Limhi's account of finding the bones of the destroyed Jaredites.

Roberts suggests (half-heartedly) that the name Ether comes from the name Ethan (p. 187). Roberts could not find the name Ether in the Bible, but it is there, Josh. 15:42, from the Hebrew Ceter meaning "abundance" or "odor" or "prayer or supplication," thus an acceptable ancient word.

There are also a few other similarities between VH and the Book of Mormon which Roberts overlooked. For example, VH refers to the idea that the Israelites will be grafted back into their own olive tree, see Rom. 11:28 (p. 254), cf. Jacob 5. This idea is found in the Bible.

In sum, in the face of all the differences between VH and the Book of Mormon, these few slender similarities pale. If VH provided any inspiration for the Book of Mormon, it did not provide much. Even the position that Joseph Smith "could have used [VH] as a rich source of ideas for some structural and narrative aspects of the Book of Mormon," suggested as tenable by M. Sowell, Sunstone 6 (May/June 1981), p. 52, seems implausible in light of the fact that the Book of Mormon contradicts and ignores VH on so many important occasions.

This would seem to cover Roberts' issues from A to Z. A few other points might be dealt with, but I believe I have covered most of them. I conclude that Roberts would lose the case if he pressed these points today. I also conclude that this would not bother Roberts in the least. For him, debate was a means to an end--a path to better understanding for all, winner and loser alike. Would this embarrass so great and respected a man as Roberts? Not at all. He fervently hoped that "the generations who succeed us . . . will find that we have had some misconceptions and made some wrong deductions in our day and time. The book of knowledge is never a sealed book." New Witnesses for God, vol. 3, pp. 503-4.

It should also be pointed out that I have only summarized research which responds to Roberts' questions. There are, of course, other questions which can be asked about the Book of Mormon; answers to all of them are not always available. Other times such studies generate impressive support for the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon is not a simple matter academically either pro or con. It can neither be proven or disproven. As Roberts himself stated, "The book of knowledge is never a sealed book. It is never 'completely and forever closed;' rather it is an eternally open book, in which one may go on constantly discovering new truths and modifying our knowledge of old ones." New Witnesses, vol. 3, pp. 503-4.

Roberts concluded his paper on VH (p. 242) with the question, "Can such numerous and convincing points of resemblance and suggestive contact be merely coincidence?" Clearly one can confidently answer "Yes." It is not hard to believe that what little resemblance we have here between VH and the Book of Mormon is a matter of coincidence. Roberts has produced neither numerous nor startling points of resemblance. In fact, the differences far outweigh the similarities, and most of the similarities dissolve upon simple examination. While some of the remaining similarities cause one to stop and think, most of them are very general, and therefore quite unremarkable.